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**The Formation of Parental Language Ideology in a Multilingual Context: A Case Study in Taiwan**

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# **The Formation of Parental Language Ideology in a Multilingual Context- A Case Study in Taiwan**

Yi Ling (Rene) Chen

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Education

University of Bath

Department of Education

March 2011

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Yi Ling (Rene) Chen

## **Abstract**

In the past ten years, the number of English cram schools has tripled in Taiwan and more than 70% of fifth and sixth graders claim they attended cram schools before receiving formal English education in primary schools. In response to pressures of both globalisation and localisation, the government introduced a school policy of learning a Taiwanese minority language, in addition to Mandarin, in 2005. The majority of parents, however, are not keen to encourage their children to learn a Taiwanese second language compared to the ‘trend’ of learning English (as a foreign language).

This study explores family language policies using a multiple-case-study strategy with twelve families whose children attend a language school in Taichung, Taiwan, with two additional cases from different geolinguistic areas. The main focus is on how parents form their ideologies about language and language learning. The data were gathered using semi-structured interviews. The macro- and micro-factors which underpin the parents’ language ideologies are the central focus of analysis. Amongst these families the process of ideology formation involves more than three languages, English, Mandarin, Minnan and Hakfa (which, in this study, is the only representative of other minority languages spoken in Taiwan). The three Chinese languages appear as ‘mother tongue’ in various combinations amongst the parents in the study.

The findings indicate that the influence of macro- and micro-factors on parents’ language ideologies is complex and interactive, rather than linear. Significant macro-factors identified include the local, national and global sociolinguistic environments, government policies and economic factors, notably the labour market. Macro-factors, as well as micro-factors, do not influence parents’ ideologies in isolation from each other. Similar, shared macro-contexts are responded to in diverse ways by the parents in the study, with familial mother tongue, educational experiences and different perceptions of the social roles of language all playing a part. Parents’ language ideologies are, therefore, clearly not structurally determined, but neither do the parents act as ‘free agents’ in their ideological choices which, in turn, have an impact on family language management and language practices. The complexity and fluidity of the Taiwanese language situation and the rapid social, political and economic changes that are taking place in the community make this study particularly valuable in enhancing our understanding of how personal language ideologies evolve.

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## **List of Acronyms**

<i>Acronym</i>	<i>Name</i>
BERA	The British Educational Research Association
DPP	The Democratic Progressive Party
ESL	English as a second language
GEPT	The General English Proficiency Test
KMT	The <i>Kuo Min Tang</i> (the ‘Chinese Nationalist Party’ in translation)
LAD	Language Acquisition Device
MOE	The Ministry of Education
PRC	The People’s Republic of China (commonly known as China)
ROC	The Republic of China (commonly known as Taiwan)
SES	Socio-economic status
SLA	Second language acquisition
UG	Universal Grammar

## **Chapter 1 – Introduction**

Taiwan is a multilingual and multicultural society. Huang (1993) identifies four ethnic groups in the population of Taiwan: aboriginal people<sup>1</sup> (1.7%), Hakka (12%), Mainlanders<sup>2</sup> (13%) and Minnan<sup>3</sup> (73.3%) (cited in S. C. Chen, 2006). Huang's categorisation can be criticised as being ethno-centric, since he recognised three distinct 'ethnicities' amongst the Chinese population but groups all aboriginal residents together. In any case, 'ethnicity' is a problematic concept and in this study my focus is primarily on language, not ethnic identity. More than 20 'indigenous' languages are spoken in Taiwan, including Mandarin, Hakfa<sup>4</sup>, Taiwanese<sup>5</sup> and Austro-Polynesian aboriginal languages<sup>6</sup> (Lewis, 2009). Even though Minnan-people form the majority, Mandarin is spoken by most of the families in Taiwan, even after martial law was lifted in 1987 and the Mandarin-monopolising linguistic-cultural situation legally ended (Tsao, 1999). Language minority groups are experiencing a distinct language shift toward Mandarin and a dramatic decline in 'mother-tongue' maintenance at home.

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<sup>1</sup> There are only 2 percent of the population are aboriginal people, yet these people have been native Taiwanese since several thousand years ago before other people migrated from Mainland China. There are more than 20 different aboriginal tribes in mountain areas in Taiwan and they speak different aboriginal dialects. Some linguists state that aboriginal dialects are branches of the Malay language system and other Southern Pacific language system.

<sup>2</sup> Mainlanders refer to the immigrants who came to Taiwan with the KMT in the 1940s. Mandarin is regarded as the mother-tongue or lingua franca among Mainlanders.

<sup>3</sup> Minnan is the name of both the ethnic group and their mother-tongue. Minnan people refer to those who immigrated to Taiwan from Guangzhou and Zhangzhou districts of Fujian, southern China before the KMT.

<sup>4</sup> Hakka is the name of the ethnic group; Hakfa or Hakka-fa refers to the mother-tongue of people of Hakka ethnicity who were from Guangdong originally.

<sup>5</sup> Taiwanese (the language) is also called Minnan, Holooe, Southern Min, Taigi, or Taiyu. The broad definition of Taiwanese includes all the indigenous languages which were spoken before the KMT government came to Taiwan. Often, Taiwanese (the language) refers to Minnan only. In this thesis, in order to prevent ambiguity, I will adopt the broad definition of 'Taiwanese' which means all vernaculars spoken in Taiwan before the KMT's regime and use 'Minnan' to be the language which Minnan people speak.

<sup>6</sup> There are 21 aboriginal languages, including Amis, Nataoran (Amis), Atayal, Babuza, Basay, Bunun, Kananabau, Kavalan, Ketangalan, Kulon-Pazeh, Paiwan, Papora-Hoanya, Puyuma, Rukai, Saaroa, Saisiyat, Siraya, Taroko, Thao, Tsou, and Yami; six of them nearly extinct.

Globally, May (2000) estimated that between 20% and 50% of approximately 6000 languages that are spoken in the world today will vanish by the end of twenty-first century. This decline is especially noticeable in bilingual or multilingual communities, like Taiwan. It is believed that in these societies, a 'majority' language - that is, "a language with greater political power, privilege and social prestige- comes to replace the range and functions of a 'minority' language. The result of this process is that speakers of the minority language 'shift' over time to speak the majority language" (May, 2000, p. 366). This process is often accelerated and facilitated by the majority language being the medium of instruction in schools.

In response to social pressure for localisation and the revitalisation of minority languages, the Taiwanese government implemented the teaching of mother-tongue in 2001. Meanwhile, the teaching of English was banned in kindergartens in 2004. From my previous teaching experience, I found that parents' behaviours often seemed to contrast with national goals and policies. Oladejo (2006) claims that only prominent politicians, business tycoons, and privileged academics were consulted before these language policies were put into action. Most Taiwanese parents, whose children were influenced directly by these language policies, were neglected and silent in policy planning. He suggests that although the success of a language policy requires expert views, the voices of the 'taxpayers' should also be heard instead of the perceptions of the authority only. Perhaps more importantly, the voices of 'language users' should have been taken into consideration.

As a result, I am particularly interested in researching parents' expectations of their children's language education and investigate how these influence their behaviours, including language policy at home and educational involvement. The

main focus is on how parents perceive the role(s) of mother-tongue and English in terms of its functions and the factors which influence the formation of their ideology of language and language learning.

Taiwan has been colonised by several foreign regimes since the 17<sup>th</sup> century; therefore, the implementation of language policy has been a complicated and controversial issue. It has served as a political tool rather than an educational one ever since then.

### **1.1 A History of Language Policy in Taiwan**

The demographic composition of Taiwan nowadays is the result of three waves of immigration, starting from the 17<sup>th</sup> century and continuing until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which took over the lands of the existing aborigines who had lived in Taiwan for thousand years. The language status of each group was determined by the language policies adopted by the government of each colonised periods (Chen, 2006). Taiwan<sup>7</sup> was first colonised by the Dutch (1624-1662) in the south and almost simultaneously by the Spanish (1626-1642) in the north. Then it was back to a Chinese regime (both Ming Dynasty and Ching Dynasty) until Taiwan was ceded to Japan in 1895.

Under Dutch rule, the Austro-Polynesian aborigines still outnumbered the Minnan speakers to a great extent in the south (Chen, 2006). The Spanish, on the other end of Taiwan, adopted a “pragmatic language policy that was neither

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<sup>7</sup> Taiwan was also known as ‘Formosa’ or ‘Formosa Island’ in the Dutch and Spanish colonisation period.

oppressive nor discriminatory” (Tsao, 2000, p. 61). The Spanish assisted in “designing Romanised spelling systems for the native aboriginal languages, and in codifying and preserving the native languages” (Tse, 2000, p. 155). After Taiwan came under the sovereignty of the Ching Empire in 1683, many migrants came from Fujian. Their language, Minnan, therefore became the dominant language of Taiwan at that time. Although Hakka people started to immigrate to Taiwan in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the number of Hakka people remained small. Hence, Minnan was still the dominant language and Hakfa speakers were pressured to be bilingual in Minnan and Hakfa. The surveillance of the Ching dynasty largely ignored Taiwan and left it unaffected by any language policy. The status of different languages was therefore decided by the major groups of speakers (Huang, 2000).

The most recent colonisations were the Japanese regime (1895-1945) and the KMT<sup>8</sup> regime (1945-2000)<sup>9</sup>. Japan defeated the Ching Empire in the Sino-Japanese War and took over Taiwan in 1895. The priority for the Japanese authority was to assimilate the Taiwanese people into the Japanese culture and to integrate Taiwan fully into the Japanese Empire. For this purpose, policies of complete Japanisation were promulgated (Tsao, 2000). One of the most important policies was to require all Taiwanese people to learn Japanese. Although English was offered as a foreign language as an optional subject to boys (not girls) in secondary schools, few had access to English classes (Chen, 2003). The language policy of the Japanese colonisation oppressively damaged the status of Minnan, Hakfa, and

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<sup>8</sup> The KMT was formerly a political party in Mainland China until 1949. In 1945 the KMT took over Taiwan on behalf of Allied Powers after Japan surrendered. In 1949, the troops of the KMT were completely defeated by the Chinese Communist Party in Mainland China, so the KMT decided to continue to occupy Taiwan as a base to fight against Chinese communists in order to go back to China.

<sup>9</sup> The KMT was the ruling party from 1945 until 2000, when the presidential candidate Chen Shui Bian of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), the native opposition party, was elected as the new president of Taiwan.

Austro-Polynesian languages (Chen, 2006). After World War II, Taiwan was returned to China (the KMT Government); Japanese was prohibited and Mandarin was promoted (Feifel, 1994). At that time, it was estimated that more than 50% of the population was able to speak Japanese. Up to the present, even though Japanese is not one of the second languages of Taiwan, it is not unusual to hear people speak Japanese in daily conversation (some even speak it fluently), especially among those who are over 60 years old (Oladejo, 2006).

Shortly after Taiwan was returned to Chinese government, the KMT lost the civil war against the Chinese Communist Party on the mainland and withdrew to Taiwan in 1949. This phenomenon greatly changed the sociolinguistic environment in Taiwan (Chen, 2006). Even though these refugees actually consisted of people from different provinces of Mainland China, Mandarin was the major marker of their identity in spite of their different accents and they were referred to as 'Mainlanders' by the Taiwanese people. Being aware of the profound influence the Japanese exerted over the Taiwanese during colonisation and making Taiwan the solitary fort against the Chinese Communist Party, the KMT government recognised the importance of education as a means of re-socialisation and 'Sinofication' (Tsai, 2002). Hence the government enforced rigorous national policies of monolingualism and monoculturalism. The propagation and teaching of Mandarin as the national language, in addition to Chinese culture, was regarded as crucial to this project by the KMT authority.

The enforcement of such educational policies was not simply the purpose of 'de-Japanisation' but also a complicated political manoeuvre (Hsiao, 1997). In order to facilitate its dominance over Taiwan as well as to justify Taiwan's legitimacy

against the People's Republic of China (PRC) on the mainland, it was necessary for the KMT to strengthen the status of Chinese culture on the island. The KMT government, the Chinese nation, Chinese culture, and Mandarin were been identified with one another (Hsiau, 1997). Language and cultural education thus became a tool for shaping and confirming the unified collective ideology. The introduction of martial law in 1949 allowed central direction of this process. All non-Mandarin languages spoken by indigenous Taiwanese, including Minnan, Hakfa, and all Austro-Polynesian local languages, were categorised as 'dialects' by the KMT, with Mandarin being defined as the 'only language' as well as the single orthodox language representing the Republic of China (ROC). The use of local dialects and the maintenance of indigenous cultures were considered to threaten political solidarity and national identity. Therefore, speakers of indigenous languages were forced to abandon 'localism' by sacrificing their mother-tongue (Hsiau, 1997). The functions and prestigious status granted to Mandarin in schools and other official domains effectively upheld the only national language in Taiwan at the cost of suppressing other indigenous languages (Chen, 2004).

Mainlanders dominated the prestigious positions in government and social class between 1949 and 1987 (Jao & McKeever, 2006). Mandarin was used in all domains, English played a very limited role and local languages had no status at state level at all (Chen, 2006). Public-sector employment was influenced by ethnicity and language competence. After the end of martial law in 1987, a series of "nativistic movements" (Yin, 1996, p. 69) were promoted and mainly focused on the revival of Taiwanese local cultures and languages, leading to conflicts between the Mainlanders and indigenous Taiwanese (Jao & McKeever, 2006). Consequently, the public started to focus on the revival of the declining indigenous cultures and languages, which was a



call for a pluralist language education planning later (Chen, 1998).

The establishment of the opposition, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP hereafter) in 1986, was considered as the beginning of democracy in Taiwan (Tsao, 1999). The DPP tried to implement mother-tongue teaching in places where it dominated local government; however, the effort failed because of a lack of support and finance from the central government<sup>10</sup>. Despite the frustrating results of the local governments' efforts in mother-tongue education, the 'pressure of localisation', which referred to preserving and revitalising the indigenous languages and cultures, was not to be diminished (Chen, 1998).

### **1.1.1 The Importance of English in Taiwan**

The current trend of learning English as a second or foreign language has been spurred by the growth of the United States as the prevailing economic power in the global market in the past few decades, while at the beginning of the twentieth century, those who learnt the language were mostly from British colonial countries or the Commonwealth of Nations. The status of English has continued to be promoted as the global language owing to the dominant economic power of the US. With such dominance and its political and economic underpinnings, it is not surprising that the United States is supportive of the way English is developing now (Crystal, 2003). Statistics show that 375 million people speak English as their first language, 375 million people speak English as a second language, and 750 million people learn English as a foreign language. It is estimated that more than a quarter of world's population (about 1.5 billion people) are considered to be competent or fluent in

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<sup>10</sup> At this time, Taiwan was still under the KMT government.

English (Edwards, 2004). In January 2008, the British Prime Minister announced a massive new programme of activity to strengthen English worldwide while visiting China and India. He believed that teaching English would quickly become one of Britain's biggest exports; it could add a 'staggering' £50 billion a year to the UK economy by 2010 (Phillipson, 2010).

The fact that English is integral to globalisation can be attributed to several domains, such as McDonaldisation, the United Nations, the World Trade Organisation, the European Union, Hollywood products, BBC, CNN and so on (Phillipson, 2001). Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) claims that the promotion of English is at the expense of other languages and interlocks linguistic imperialism with homogenisation of world culture. Phillipson (2006) also points out that when English is referred to as a 'universal' lingua franca, we should notice that the use of English benefits some much more than others because many minority groups do not speak English or cannot afford to learn English. Many people claim that English is the contemporary world language, but this then makes English serve as a means of exclusion for those who do not possess it (Phillipson, 2001). These people are impoverished and their "linguistic human rights" are not being respected (Phillipson, *ibid*, p. 190). To reverse the circumstances, he adds, require efforts at all levels from the local to the global to put language policy higher on political agendas.

Phillipson (2001) estimates that the English-speaking '*haves*' consume 80% of the world's available resources; therefore, it is understandable that the world's citizens are eager to learn English. The use of English is increasing throughout Europe too; it has become the most widely learned foreign language in Europe. Research published in English is seen as more prestigious than that appearing in a national language.

These developments all impact on other languages, with English as a foreign language in continental Europe transforming into a kind of second language (Phillipson, 2009).

Taiwan is credited as being one of the four Asian Tigers (together with Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea), noted for exceptionally high economic growth rates and rapid industrialisation between the 1960s and 1990s. Hong Kong and Singapore were colonised by the British and English is their official language. Taiwan and South Korea, on the other hand, were closely linked to America economically and politically during the Cold War, and 'English fever' has spread in these two countries. Krashen (2003) defines 'English fever' as "the overwhelming desire to acquire English, or to ensure that one's children acquire English, as a second or foreign language" (p.100). Park (2009) claims the current pursuit of 'English education' in Korea can be traced back to traditional 'education fever'. Korean parents even send children to Anglophone countries to learn English well in order to gain educational advantage in the future. Song (2010) mentions that Middle-class Korean parents rely heavily on transnational education strategies, in order to stabilise their 'symbolic capital', for their families' class maintenance and upward mobility. He notices that opportunities to study abroad are limited to middle/upper-class children and have widened the educational gap between the *haves* and *have-nots* in Korea.

Historically, English has never been implemented as the first or a second language in Taiwan, but it cannot be unaffected by the global trend of learning English. Not only do employees start to learn English in order to enhance their mobility in job markets but also parents send their children to language schools as early as possible if they are financially able. In terms of daily communication functions, English is not spoken as either first or second language by most Taiwanese

citizens. However, English has a unique and more prestigious status than other foreign languages on the island (Oladejo, 2006). Competence in English has become a prerequisite for job entry and promotion in government services from 2010 (*ibid*). More significantly, English is the only compulsory foreign language in schools, and one of the two compulsory languages in the national entrance exams to senior-high schools and universities, the other being Mandarin. Wu (2009) reports that in 2007, the number of tertiary institutions had expanded to 149 and students increased to 966,591. This expansion of the higher education system caused credential inflation in tertiary education; parents want their children strive for elite university and consequently increased positional competitions in Taiwan; learning English well is seen as a strategy.

A solid grasp of English is therefore commonly considered a necessity for people on this island. Lee (2008) claims that “a good command of English ability means opportunity, which will help improve an individual’s status or economic development” (p. 7). Consequently, an ‘English fever’ has broken out and there is an overwhelming desire for everyone to learn English, while parents also make sure their children learn English, too (Oladejo, 2006). A number of parents send their young children to English language schools or so-called bilingual kindergartens. They are anxious that their children may fall behind their peers in English proficiency (Lo, 2007). Parents, as long as they can afford the fees, are eager to send their children to take English lessons early in life.

According to the governmental information management system online<sup>11</sup>, the number of licensed short-term '*busiban*'<sup>12</sup> is estimated to reach 18,392 around the island by 2010; compared to the total of 5,866 '*busiban*' in 2001, the number has increased dramatically. It is also pointed out that among '*busiban*', English '*busiban*' are the most popular. There are two types of English '*busiban*': English cram schools and English language schools<sup>13</sup>. There are 9,853 English 'cram schools' and 5,343 English language schools in 2010. The majority of students enrol between the ages of 6 and 15 years. It is quite normal in Taiwan for pupils to attend English '*busiban*' after normal school hours (Chao, 2004).

### 1.1.2 Mother-tongues or English in Present-day Taiwan?

As the local people had been gradually entering the centres of political power and finally the DPP won the presidential election in 2000<sup>14</sup>, the negative attitude people had toward the indigenous languages had gradually been changing. The DPP Minister of Education announced that mother-tongue teaching would be made compulsory in primary school in 2001. Primary school pupils from Grade 1 to Grade 4 would be required to spend one or two hours a week learning one of Taiwan's

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<sup>11</sup> <http://bsb.edu.tw/>

The statistics was accessed on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2010 and there were 18,392 short-term cram schools on the date accessed.

<sup>12</sup> 'Busiban' are also known as 'cram schools' or 'supplementary schools' outside formal schooling. They are private learning institutions which were first established to supplement under-performing pupils' learning outside school. However, more and more parents send their children to these schools in order to enhance their children's achievement. Therefore, they gained the name 'cram schools', literally. Primary and secondary school pupils are their principal recruits. They not only teach school subjects, like maths, Mandarin, or English, in order to supplement and improve a pupil's school performance, but also other accomplishments, such as piano-playing or art. Students attend '*busiban*' after school on weekdays/ weeknights or on weekends.

<sup>13</sup> See Section 3.2.2 for more discussion about these two kinds of '*busiban*'

<sup>14</sup> The DPP presidential candidate, Chen Shui Bian, was elected as the new president of Taiwan for the first time in history.

indigenous languages- Minnan, Hakfa, or aboriginal languages<sup>15</sup>. English, on the other hand, was also a requirement from 2001 for fifth-graders and sixth-graders to ‘internationalise’ the country (Chen, 2006). At secondary-school level, indigenous language classes are optional, according to the schools’ discretion (*The Taipei Times*, January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2000).

In addition to implementing mother-tongue education, the government started to allow aboriginal people to show their native names on ID cards in 2001. Ever since the KMT regime, every citizen was required to speak Mandarin and use Chinese names only. The KMT government’s policy had the effect of lowering native people’s identification with their ethnicity, especially aborigines both in their own perceptions and that of societies as a whole. De Mejia (2002) points out that language, name and identity are closely interwoven.

Mother-tongue education now is not satisfactory. Reasons why it is not satisfactory are that first it was implemented without thorough planning in terms of teaching materials and qualified teachers and it was also perceived as being politically motivated (i.e. de-Sinofication and Taiwanese identity), and wanting to be seen as responsive to civil movements in support of local languages (Chen, 2006). About 60% of primary schools offered aboriginal languages and around 40% of them did not offer any at all (Kao, 2002). The teaching of Minnan was carried out more successfully than others in the DPP ruled areas (Wang, 2003). Inconsistent political parties and interference can harm and endanger the minority languages and cultures.

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<sup>15</sup> There are fourteen commonly-known aboriginal languages spoken in Taiwan nowadays. Schools are given leeway to offer any aboriginal language. Basically, schools may offer the language according to aboriginal people’s residential area so that students may choose different aboriginal languages from region to region. For example, schools in Taipei may offer a different aboriginal language from the one offered in Hualien (in eastern Taiwan) because aboriginal people in these two areas are from two different groups.

The quality of mother-tongue education teachers is also problematic. Schools are reluctant to hire qualified full-time minority-language teachers because of the inadequacy of the school budget. Schools prefer to ask existing qualified teachers, who are minority-language speakers, to teach their mother-tongue (Wang *et al*, 2002). The problem of Hakfa teaching is slightly different from Minnan or aboriginal teaching. Su (2002) points out that many Hakka people have been speaking Mandarin as their first language for quite a long time in recent generations; even if they identify themselves as Hakka people; about 40% of Hakka parents in non Hakka-residential areas would like their children to learn Minnan because it is the second most widely spoken language after Mandarin. Therefore, it is an issue that even though some schools have Hakfa teaching, some Hakka parents do not want their children to attend.

The situation is the most serious in teaching aboriginal languages. According to Kao's statistics (2002), in aborigine-residential areas, 30% of junior high schools offered aboriginal language courses once a week. 70% of junior high schools and 39% of primary schools did not offer aboriginal language courses at all due to the lack of qualified teachers. Among the primary schools, 2% of schools offered the course once a month; 45% taught these language courses once a week and 12% twice a week. Only 4% offered the course every day. In short, although the government implemented mother-tongue teaching in 2001, some schools still do not have qualified teachers to teach the course or are reluctant to do so.

Two major problems occurred in mother-tongue teaching (Kao, 2002). First, although the teachers are qualified teachers, they are often not specialist language teachers. They teach aboriginal languages only because it is their mother-tongue.

About 30% of them agree their mother-tongue ability is very fluent (*ibid*). Second, there is another great issue of the numbers of teachers. Although mother-tongue education is a compulsory subject in primary schools and an optional course in junior high schools, there are not enough teachers to teach some of the languages. There were 2,362 primary schools and 1,764 junior high schools in Taiwan in 2002. Theoretically, there should be at least one aboriginal language offered in every school either as a compulsory or an optional course. In the aborigine-residential areas, there should be more languages courses offered. There are only 2,901 qualified aborigine teachers. Therefore, it is a great problem for schools to hire qualified aboriginal language teachers (*ibid*).

Along with localisation and mother-tongue revitalisation, globalisation is also an issue in Taiwan. Globalisation, without doubt, is one of the defining phenomena in of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Its process is especially obvious in economy, yet it influences all spheres of life, political and social systems, institutions, values and also daily lives of individuals. A knowledge of English is widely perceived as a key to success in this contemporary globalising world and English learning, therefore, has become increasingly important in Taiwan. A survey by Chen (2004) reveals that in Taipei City 83% of all sixth graders had taken English courses before, more than 80% of primary school pupils had joined after school English language schools, and about 42% of them learnt English in kindergartens.

However, in February 2004, the Ministry of Education (MOE) announced that no public kindergartens are allowed to offer a day-long English-only curriculum, a bilingual curriculum, or English as a separate subject. In other words, English could not be taught in public kindergartens. As for private kindergartens, English could only



be incorporated into regular kindergarten programmes for no more than three hours a week. The reason given for the ban was that preschool children exposed to an English-only environment would be denied the means to fully express their emotions and needs in their mother-tongue. This would harm the children's development and hinder their first language development (*China Post*, Feb. 10, 2004). However, some local education authorities, parents, and preschool operators have criticised the ban because they believe that language learning should start earlier. Meanwhile, in 2005, the MOE implemented a new language policy that made English a compulsory subject in primary schools from the third-grade<sup>16</sup>. The purpose of the new language policy is to help pupils from economically-underprivileged families which are unable to afford English classes outside of school.

Due to the ban, more economically advantaged parents send their children to English language schools or English-only private kindergartens<sup>17</sup> to learn English before schooling (Lo, 2007). This has widened the gap between children from privileged families and underprivileged families. Children from richer families start to learn English before they enter primary school, while those from poorer families do not get to study the language until third grade. Those families with a higher SES can provide learning opportunities, learning experiences and learning assistance that facilitate their children's English learning (Wang, 2000). Since English is the only foreign language offered in the National Curriculum and also a subject of entrance examinations from junior high school to university, its possession can be seen as linguistic capital. He (2009) discovered in China that "English proficiency was

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<sup>16</sup> English was taught only in secondary schools before 1998 and it became a subject of fifth-graders and sixth-graders in 2001.

<sup>17</sup> Although English could not be taught as a subject in kindergartens, it was not forbidden to use English as a medium to teach other subjects.

scholastic capital valuable in the education market to the extent that it could be mobilised in examinations in exchange for better educational and life chances” (p. 10). In Taiwan, English is similarly regarded: only certain number of people can enjoy the advantages of English and it is used to eliminate the opportunities for *have-nots* to pursue further education.

Former President Chen Sui Bian inflamed the debate by calling for English to become the second official language in 2002. Since then, debates have ensued over the status and role of English in Taiwan. The former Premier, Yu, soon followed with an endorsement of the president’s view promising to make English the second official language of the country within six years (Ko & Yeh, 2002). The DPP government claimed that making English an official language could equalise all citizens, especially those who cannot afford to invest in English learning to develop their personal capital. A famous mass media station in Taiwan, *TVBS*, conducted an opinion poll in March 2002, and the result showed that 60% of the respondents were in favour of making English the second official language (*The Taipei Times*, March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2002).

Another recent change aimed at enhancing the Taiwan people’s interest in English was the introduction of the General English Proficiency Test (GEPT), which commenced in 2000. The objective was to improve and standardise the English performance of the citizens in different English proficiency levels in order to compete better in the globalised millennium. It was proposed that different age-group students need to hold different proficiency certificates before graduating. Efforts are also underway to encourage teachers of different subjects at various levels to learn English. Additionally, competence in English will become a prerequisite for promotion in the public sector (Oladejo, 2006). Given this overwhelming impression of English as an

important foreign language across the country, especially through formal education, and in view of its prestigious status globally, it is not surprising that more and more Taiwanese parents want to introduce their children to English learning before the official commencement age.

For decades, languages have not only been regarded as ethnic markers but also identified with political ideologies. Language use in Taiwan has always been influenced by political and economic changes and the formulation of language policies goes beyond educational considerations. Mandarin used to be a language imposed by the KMT government for political reasons, but has now gained its dominant status in Taiwan as the official language and as a sign of being educated, and no one seems to question its position. English, which has become a ‘national obsession’ in Taiwan (Liu, 2002), has been enjoying its prestigious status in business, education and other domains after the Cold War. Minnan and other local languages suffered suppression. The use of Minnan has been a symbol of ethnic loyalty and political allegiance to the DPP. When the DPP gained power from the KMT government in 2000, a series of mother-tongue education policies were implemented; Minnan remains the most successful among all local languages. To some people, Mandarin is associated with culture, history and politics; English is the language many people want to master for economic reasons; Minnan is the most widely-spoken local language. So where is the place for Hakfa and the aboriginal languages? The tensions among these languages should not be neglected.

Although it is one’s right to protect and promote mother-tongue teaching, one needs to be cautious not to uphold a specific ethno-linguistic group’s mother-tongue by sacrificing the language rights of other groups, because there is always a minority

group among minorities (Jao & McKeever, 2006). Some people argue that if the government puts much more stress on English education than on the teaching of mother-tongue, then the latter will definitely suffer extinction, and consequently indigenous languages and cultures will certainly diminish in the end, which will be an irreplaceable loss for the country (Oladejo, 2006). The goal and mission of a government within a multilingual and/or multicultural context is not only to emphasise the benefits and rights of the dominant ethnic group, but also to give more deliberate consideration to protecting the rights of other marginalised and/or minority groups. The dilemma of national language ideology, brought up by Coulmas (1988), needs our consideration, i.e. “whether language can be politically instrumentalised without becoming a means of suppression and making it ever more difficult for different language groups to live together peacefully” (p12).

## **1.2 The Purpose of the Study**

The introduction of the GEPT in Taiwan has promoted a flock of students into both types of English ‘*busiban*’. In order to attract customers, these language schools emphasise and exaggerate the significance of English proficiency and try to deceive English learners into seeing it as the ‘only’ passport to success in education and the work place (Tsai, 2009). Therefore, the enthusiasm about learning English shapes people’s ideas of the language with little questioning.

Moreover, lower birth rate in Taiwan means fewer children in each family, so that they are materially taken better care of by their parents. My own experience suggests that there is a common parental conception (or perhaps ‘misconception’) that the best way to love a child is to offer him/her more material provisions. Due to the

national acknowledgement of English in formal schooling, the introduction of the GEPT, and the international significance of the language, it is not surprising to see that English language schools and kindergartens have emerged all over Taiwan because parents do not want their children to fall behind others in the future (Oladejo, 2006). Some people believe English is indispensable in life and some take for granted that English proficiency is essential for social and economic success, especially the 'haves'. There are very obvious discrepancies in the English levels of primary school pupils, and the phenomenon of a bimodal distribution of English proficiency is becoming serious among the rich and the poor (Lo, 2007).

One can, with caution, draw parallels between Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese societies. Both are multilingual societies and Chinese communities; and Taiwan shares many similar beliefs and traditions with Mainland China, such as the way parents value education, traceable to a Confucian heritage. In China, English ability is considered to link to social status. Many Chinese parents consider it as a means for achieving social and economic advancement in the future for their children (Gao, 2006). He (2009) also finds that many ethnic-minority people think being able to speak English is more important than being able to speak their mother-tongues in and many vernacular dialects in China are vanishing. Taiwan faces similar situations too; because of the Mandarin-monolingualism, a lot of native Taiwanese under the age of 20 have forgotten their mother-tongue and people between 20 and 50 are unable to use mother-tongue fluently in public speeches (Law, 2002). Some broad patterns of language shift have been identified in quantitative studies discussed above (Gao, 2006; He, 2009; Law, 2002). My interest in this study is in understanding the reasons for this shift, drawing on the concept of family language ideology as the driving force behind language management and practice at the family level.

It is remarkable to investigate parents' ideologies of language and language learning in relation to Mandarin, minority language(s) and English, the factors which influence their ideologies and the behaviours or involvement in response to their ideologies for the following reasons:

1. While the government was striving with the dilemma of globalisation and localisation, several language policies were implemented. Yet, few studies were done to explore parents' responses to these policies.
2. Living in similar, shared macro-contexts in Taiwan, some families have experienced language shift from minority languages to Mandarin, while others maintained their mother-tongue. No similar study was done before to examine parents' attitudes towards language shift and language maintenance and the factors which influence these sociolinguistic phenomena.
3. The majority of studies (see Chang & Huang, 1999; Chen, 2000; Hung, 2007; Jao & McKeever, 2006; Li, 2004; Lo, 2007; Wu, 2009 for more discussion) in the area of parent involvement have examined family influences on children's performance in general, whereas few have examined the effects that parental involvement can have on language shift at home or children's English learning
4. Research on English language learning in the past has relied heavily either on cognitive and linguistic theories or English language teaching theories. Parental involvement has not yet become a widely-researched issue in relation to foreign language learners' development.
5. Parents of older generations could not become involved much in children's English learning due to their low English ability. However, English has become a compulsory subject in schools since 1968, and parents of newer generations are more aware of the importance of English education and can get involved more.

6. The birth rate is decreasing nowadays and family structure is changing to be more 'nuclear'. One consequence is that parents pay more attention to children's education.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The purpose of this research is to explore Taiwanese parents' language ideology and home language policy in relation to mother-tongue and English learning. I examine the influence of various social contextual factors on parents' views of language, the role(s) of language and language learning. In this study, the process of ideology formation involves four languages: English, Mandarin, Minnan and Hakfa (which, in this study, is the only representative of other minority languages spoken in Taiwan). The three Chinese languages appear as 'mother-tongue' in various combinations amongst the parents in the study. I try to discover parents' thoughts about newly-implemented mother-tongue teaching policy and English learning policy, related to social and cultural contexts in Taiwan and their personal experience; to understand their expectations towards their children's English education; and to investigate how their expectations influence their behaviours with regards to their children's English education in terms of language policy at home, educational involvement, and other support.

My over-arching research aim is to explore how and why language shift is taking place in language use within Taiwanese families, particularly in indigenous Taiwanese families, as distinct from those families with recent 'mainland' origins.

Accordingly, four main research questions are derived from this aim:

1. *How do parents perceive the function/role of languages?*
2. *What are parents' ideologies of language and language learning?*
3. *What are the underlying factors which influence parents' language ideologies?*
4. *How do these ideologies influence parents' language management and language practices?*



## **Chapter 2 – Literature Review**

Given the very considerable literature on language issues, only areas considered to be particularly relevant are reviewed in this chapter: first language acquisition, second/foreign language acquisition, and parental involvement in education and in language acquisition.

There is an issue of terminology in distinguishing mother-tongue, first language, native language and heritage language. As will become clear in this thesis, in the Taiwanese context, the relationship between these terms is particularly complex. In general I would use the term mother-tongue although first language, native language and heritage language will also appear, but their meanings must be understood in context. The literature is confused in its terminology; I do not aim to unpack or differentiate the different terms here as the context is so complex that it would be difficult to give precise meanings. In the following sections, I follow the terminology used in the particular work being reviewed.

### **2.1 First Language Acquisition**

Watson-Gegeo (2004) claims that children acquire their first language easily and ubiquitously. Usually children have already acquired the key features of their first language by the age of three (Stephens & Richards, 2001). Where formal education is in the mother-tongue, this serves a function of establishing and maintaining a socio-cultural link between formal schooling and everyday language spoken at home (Salami, 2008). Under normal circumstances, parents, caregivers (or other adults) and

older children in the home environment provide linguistic behaviours and language samples, which are known as *input*, to help infants acquire their first language (Yule, 2010). Yule also suggests that full exercise of infants' brains by exposing them to a rich linguistic environment is beneficial to learning an additional language later in children's lives.

As to how an infant acquires the first language, there are two main traditions- the nativist and the behaviourist- the discussion of which is also known as the nature-nurture debate. In the nativist tradition, Chomsky (1965) assumed that first language acquisition was driven or assisted by an innate linguistic structure, the *language acquisition device* (LAD) (replaced by *universal grammar* (UG) later in his work). It helps children to identify and acquire any natural linguistic rules which are relevant in their target language. While acquisition continues, universal grammar becomes core grammar because the set of principles and parameters is developed into a specific language and may constrain other language acquisition, especially after puberty (Harley, 2010). Once the core grammar is set, it is difficult (if not impossible) to acquire a language naturally and the time limit is suggested to be around adolescence by Lenneberg and forms his *critical period hypothesis* (Foster-Cohen, 1999). Lenneberg (1967) claimed that the ability to acquire language declines with increasing age and very young children are particularly well-adapted for language acquisition. During the critical period, children possess an innate degree of flexibility that is lost when the critical period is finished. Therefore, he concluded that language is acquired most efficiently during the critical period (cited in Harley, 2010).

On the other hand, the behaviourists believe that children are very efficient pattern and intention recognisers so that they can induce and imitate linguistic

structure based on the language they hear around them; as a consequence, they proposed that language is entirely learned and language use is highly routinised and automatised (Behrens, 2006). In addition, Piaget argued that cognitive structures themselves are not innate, but can arise from innate dispositions (Harley, 2010).

### **2.1.1 Early Literacy**

Stavans, Olshtain and Goldzweig (2009) find that most parents in literate Western societies read to their children, engage in conversations about texts, print, word meanings and other literacy activities. These behaviours seem to act as predictors of success in literacy development. It is suggested that early exposure to a print-rich environment and bed-time reading are supportive to early literacy. Engaging in children's early literacy development seems to be common in western countries; however, parents in China commonly hold different attitudes (Li & Rao, 2000). Preschools in Beijing are prohibited from teaching children to read and write because the authorities believe children in such schools are too young to learn. Li and Rao (*ibid*) find that Chinese parents in Beijing exert less effort on literacy education than parents in Hong Kong and Singapore. They also find children in Hong Kong and Singapore show significant differences and outperform children in reading in Beijing by the age of four.

No matter whether first language is acquired by nature or by nurture, there are numerous studies indicating early language acquisition is advantageous in facilitating learning an additional language. For example, Wei and Zhou (2003) suggested that cognitive reading strategies which learners used in first language learning can greatly enhance reading comprehension in a second language. Mayberry (2007) found this to

be true even for deaf children. She found that early first language acquisition can lead to successful second language learning, even when the early first language is a sign language and the subsequent second language is reading a spoken language.

According to Tse's study (2001), high levels of literacy in first language can be fostered when a number of conditions coexist that support its development, such as access to first language literacy environments, the opportunity to use the language, and guidance from more literate adults. Li and Rao (2000) conclude that early readers are usually engaged more in the following combination of conditions, compared to children who develop literacy skills later, they

1. experience more interactions with adults, involving listening, reading, writing, and independent explorations of print than others;
2. have parents who enjoy and engage in reading at home and often take them to libraries and book stores;
3. have parents who set limits on their television viewing;
4. come from homes which are well organised, and where interactions between adults and children are conducive to literacy interest and growth;
5. live in print-rich environments where books are readily accessible (p. 83).

Lamb (2008) suggests that social background is also implicated in children's language development. In his study, he found children from middle-class backgrounds usually had higher phonemic awareness because their parents had spent more time reading to them. Significant differences between middle-class and working-class children have been identified in other areas of cognition, such as conservation and verbal development. Cutting and Dunn (1999) investigated the abilities of middle- and upper-middle-class children from generally well-educated families in the UK and

concluded that different aspects of the family environment, such as sibling interactions, family discourse, and socioeconomic status (SES), also had an impact on language development and social cognition. Scheele *et al* (2010) indicate that in general, children from high SES families have more opportunities to experience language input and participate in home literacy activities which can stimulate language development by comparison with children from low SES backgrounds. On average, children from high SES backgrounds also receive more qualitative and quantitative language input and learning experiences than their financially underprivileged counterparts.

Snow (1991) studied 80 low-income families and found several characteristics of parents and of the home environment correlated with early literacy development. These characteristics included parental education, parental expectations, parents' involvement in children's homework, the creation of opportunities to learn to read at home, and possibilities of story-telling at home. Parents of low-income families may be comparatively less-educated and have lower expectations of their children's performance. They may need to work overtime and be unable to read to their children or get involved in children's education. These features are interwoven and result in lower school attainment of children from economically deprived families than their wealthy counterparts. This is also applicable to language minority children who grow up in financially underprivileged families. Scheele *et al* (2010) discovered that this group of children was not provided with adequate rich and elaborated language input to develop their first language skills further, especially in multilingual societies that provided only limited support for mother-tongue teaching.

### **2.1.2 The Teaching of Mother-tongue**

In contexts where multiple languages are in use, the teaching of mother-tongue is able to maintain multilingualism, biodiversity, and maintenance of minority cultures (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). Phillipson (2001) claims there are three reasons why people should be educated in their mother-tongue. First, it will prevent ethnic conflicts and increase one's sense of distinct identity. Second, it will prevent linguistic genocide; if there are no minority teachers in schools or minority languages are not the medium of instruction, the use of such languages is indirectly prohibited in schools and daily lives, and will consequently result in linguistic genocide. Third, it will maintain linguistic diversity and biodiversity.

Salami (2008) believes that language and culture are inseparable; language embodies, expresses and symbolises culture. He claims that mother-tongue is the best tool to transmit and appreciate culture. Yule (2010) further suggests that the mother-tongue a child speaks is not genetically inherited, but is acquired in a linguistically-rich environment and it is how one culture is transmitted from generation to generation. People usually generate a sense of ethno/national identity in a bilingual/multilingual or immigrant society (Song, 2010). Especially when the mother-tongue is a minority language in the context, the importance of maintaining one's mother-tongue can be emphasized from the perspective of maintaining and developing ones' ethnic identity, recognised by the authorities; and prevent ethnic conflicts throughout the country (*ibid*).

Apart from reinforcing cultural transmission and identity, learning one's mother-tongue is beneficial to learning a second language, as well as other additional

or foreign languages. For example, Krashen (1996) has argued that if English is taught in pupils' first languages at schools, it provides background knowledge and makes English input more comprehensible, thus accelerating English-language development for immigrant children. Peterson and Heywood (2007) also studied a group of immigrant children learning English as their second language in Canada and found out their English literacy would be enriched with continuous exposure to a print environment in their first languages at home (no matter what their first languages were). In addition, Peterson and Heywood further claimed that immigrant parents who help children to read and development literacy skills in their first language will create a transferable literacy skill from first language to second language among children and facilitate children's competencies in second language reading comprehension and writing ability. Therefore, mother-tongue education not only has political, but also cultural and linguistic value.

Mother-tongue education can be discussed from two aspects: one is 'mother-tongue is taught as a subject through the medium of official language' and the other is 'official language and other school subjects are taught through the medium of mother-tongue'. Evans (2009) suggests that pupils' mother-tongue is the most effective medium to teach and learn subject content. However, minority groups are less influential in politics around the world in the post-colonial era and the authorities usually implement educational policy for concerns other than their educational merit, usually for political purposes such as 'nation building'. One consequence of this has been "the marginalisation of vernacular languages" (*ibid*, p. 287). Salami (2008) also claims that pupils should learn subjects in their mother-tongue until the age of 12 before shifting to the medium of a second language. He explains that this is because by the age of 12 children will have acquired enough concepts in their mother-tongue

and thus be ready to transfer and carry acquired knowledge to second-language-medium education. Also, because pupils at this age have acquired enough linguistic competence, they will be able to use code-switching strategies to explore ideas more comfortably. He declares that “The learners’ mother-tongue is used as a form of scaffolding” (p. 95).

Some people express concern that learning a minority mother-tongue may interfere with second (dominant) language acquisition in terms of time exposure, because the time available for bilingual children immersed in the second language is less than their monolingual counterparts. However, Genesee and Lambert (1983) found out that the French language skills of early French-English speaking pupils were comparable to those of French-only speaking pupils in Quebec, even though bilingual pupils were actually exposed less to French input at school. In contrast, Peterson and Heywood (2007) studied a group of immigrant children from different countries who learned English as a second language in Canada and found children who lost their mother-tongue as scaffolding in the process of learning English were hindered in their ability to read and write English.

In addition to family emphasis and children’s recognition of their mother-tongue, the attitudes of schools and society also play significant roles. In Nigeria, for example, educated elites think native language education would put children at a disadvantage in the future (Salami, 2008). They also believe that indigenous languages are not suitable for teaching some subjects, such as mathematics and science because English is the lingua franca in scientific research fields. Therefore, there is a great resistance among educated elites and parents toward mother-tongue education in Nigeria (Salami, *ibid*). Salami further claims that not only



in Nigeria, but also in other African countries a majority of parents are not willing to use the mother-tongue with their children. Omoniyi (2003) observes that there is an African-wide attitude which regards “English as the instrument of true social progress, equality, and justice” (p. 147), and this is often accompanied by a negative attitude towards the indigenous language as a medium of instruction in the society. Peterson and Heywood (2007) suggest that when schools affirm pupils’ personal and cultural identities, pupils are more prone to succeed as literacy learners both in mother-tongue and second language. They believe “minority-language students develop a stronger sense of self and are more likely to apply themselves academically when teachers show them that their language and culture are welcomed in school” (*ibid*, p. 518).

### **2.1.3 Bilingualism**

A broad definition of being bilingual is that one is fluent in two languages, first and second language. However, the definition is vague because it depends on how we determine ‘fluency’. A commonly held image of a bilingual person is of someone brought up in a culture where they are exposed to two languages from birth (Harley, 2010). It is not necessary for bilinguals to be equally fluent in both languages, but they should be considered to be very proficient in the second one. Bialystock (2001) distinguishes between productive and receptive bilingualism. Productive bilinguals are speakers who can produce and understand both languages, while receptive bilinguals can only understand both languages but have limited production abilities in either language. Harley (2010) suggests that perhaps a better way to think of competence in two or more languages is to observe it as a continuum, rather than an either-or idea.

### 2.1.3.1 Different Types of Bilingualism

According to the language proficiency in each language, Carrasquillo and Rodriquez (2002) explain there are two types of bilingualism. One is 'balanced bilinguals'- who acquire approximately equal level of proficiency in both of the languages, and the other is 'dominant bilinguals'- who have one dominant language and show a high level of proficiency in many aspects of another language. Baker (2001) exemplifies this by stating that a child who can understand the delivery of the subjects and participate in classroom activity in either language at school is a balanced bilingual. In most instances the development of proficiency in the second language has inhibitive and sometimes adverse effects on the first language. It may even result in underachievement in both languages, especially in academic areas (Baker, 2001).

### 2.1.3.2 Learning/ Acquiring Two Languages Together

The term ***acquisition*** is used to refer to the gradual development of ability in a language by using it naturally in communicative contexts with native speakers. Learners exposed to long periods of time in such contexts pick up the language from native speakers. The term ***learning***, however, applies to a more conscious process of accumulating knowledge of the features, such as vocabulary and grammar, of a language, normally in an institutional setting. Whether a language is acquired, learned or both is still under debate, especially learning/acquiring a second language (Yule, 2010).

No matter whether a second language is learned or acquired, numerous studies have shown that mother-tongue plays a significant role in the process. Cummins (1981) has suggested that a solid base of one's first language acquisition builds a strong scaffold for acquiring/learning a second language (cited in Peterson & Heywood, 2007). Wei and Zhou (2003) studied Chinese immigrant children learning English as a second language in the United States and found that the best entry into English literacy at young age is through the mother-tongue. On the other hand, they also found that if the pupils did not reach a certain level in Chinese before schooling, they experienced cognitive difficulties as well as academic difficulties at a later stage.

A number of studies on the development of bilingual and monolingual children all consistently indicate that frequency of input and exposure to the language in each of a bilingual's two languages is a significant predictor of the child's performance in both languages (Bialystok, 2001; Gathercole, 2002; Oller & Eilers, 2002). Scheele *et al* (2010) also discover that bilingual children's significant outperformance over monolingual counterparts might persist over time, and perhaps never disappear. Guardado (2006) advises that "frequent contact with relatives and friends from the native culture, relating personal and family anecdotes, telling and reading first language with their children, but perhaps more importantly, bonding and creating intimate spaces for their relationships to thrive and solidify" (p. 65) are helpful in facilitating bilingualism. Scheele *et al* (2010) suggest book reading activities can stimulate both first language and second language development in bilingual children.

Lambert (1975) argues that bilingual pupils are more likely to benefit from the first language in their second language acquisition as well as other academic areas if they are additive bilinguals (in other words, they should have reached high

proficiency in their mother-tongue first). Cummins (1979) brings up a ‘threshold hypothesis’ which posits that children must achieve minimum thresholds of competence in both the first and second language before the advantages of bilingualism can be enjoyed. In order to help children benefit from bilingualism, the development of a bilingual’s proficiency in both the first and second languages will require long-term support (Yeung *et al*, 2000). Hence, support for bilingual education should include “not only encouragement of pupils to maintain their home language, but active support from policy makers, educational administrators, and classroom teachers in the enhancement of their first language proficiency” (*ibid*, p. 1020). Without these supports, bilingualism is less likely to be favoured by the learner. This finding is consistent with what Martin’s (2010) conclusion that a major cause of unsuccessful bilingualism in the UK is that people tend to assume that families and communities, rather than schools, should be responsible for teaching mother-tongues. As a result, minority languages may disappear gradually if ethnic minority people are not concerned to preserve them and also the whole society neglects them.

Mother-tongue maintenance also depends on various factors. Carrasquillo and Rodriguez (2002) believe that the motivations of parents to maintain bilingualism vary with their language proficiency in the two languages and the attitude towards minority languages held by the society. If society has positive attitudes towards minority languages, parents are more likely to encourage bilingualism in their children and language shift is less likely to happen in the family.

### 2.1.3.3 Advantages and Disadvantages of Bilingualism

Much evidence shows that bilinguals enjoy more advantages than disadvantages in comparison to monolinguals. First, because early bilinguals have acquired two languages simultaneously and have been exposed to complex language input, they are better trained to learn an additional language and have better metalinguistic awareness than monolingual children (Genesee & Lambert, 1983). Second, bilingual children are proven to develop certain cognitive processes to a greater extent than those raised monolingually (Conboy & Mills, 2006). Third, bilingualism has an advantageous effect on the function of executive control, such as complex sentences and multilingual tasks (i.e. metalinguistic awareness) (Bialystok, 2009). In addition, it has been noted that bilingual children have a larger vocabulary repertoire than monolinguals (Oller *et al*, 2007).

Early bilinguals can apply their first language knowledge to learn a second language easily and enjoy more advantages than monolinguals, even if they are exposed to a bilingual environment for only a few years (Scheele *et al*, 2010). The above mentioned advantages are found in a situation of ***positive bilingualism***, which transfers knowledge and skills from first language to second language without interference. However, evidence shows that when the time of language learning is restricted, second language acquisition inevitably takes away time for acquiring the first language. In this case, learning the dominant majority language will be at the expense of mother-tongue, a situation of ***negative (or subtractive) bilingualism*** (*ibid*).

Evidence suggests a good mastery of the first language and parental supportive attitude toward the dominant language is facilitative to a child's bilingualism because

the mother-tongue that the pupil receives can serve as a scaffold to connect the first language background knowledge and the second language knowledge. Yeung *et al* (2000) suggest that the development of bilingual children's proficiency in both L1 and L2 would require long-term support in order to help children benefit from bilingualism. Bialystok (2009) points out that there is no easy way to conclude whether raising a child monolingually is better, worse or indifferent than raising him/her bilingually.

## **2.2 Second Language Acquisition (SLA)**

A distinction must be made first between 'second language acquisition' (SLA) and 'foreign language learning' before reviewing the literature in these two fields. A second language refers to the language spoken in the surrounding community outside the home setting and foreign language learning refers to learning a language which is not commonly spoken in the surrounding community. Some researchers apply the term 'SLA' to refer to learning a 'second language' specifically but a broader definition of SLA is also used to refer to learning a foreign language (Yule, 2010). In Taiwan, most children of ethnic-minority groups learn Mandarin as their second language at school, and pupils in an English class learn English as a foreign language<sup>18</sup>. In either case, they are simply trying to learn another (where the term 'second' comes from) language, so the expression 'second language acquisition' is used more generally to describe both situations (*ibid*). In the previous sections, 'bilingualism refers to learning the first language and a 'second language' together. In

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<sup>18</sup> Some parents of ethnic-minority groups may choose not to speak their mother-tongue to their children. As a result, Mandarin becomes a first language to these children.

the following sections, I use Yule's broad definition to apply 'SLA' to both 'second language acquisition' and 'foreign language learning' settings in general.

Researchers argue whether second language acquisition is a nature or nurture process. Krashen (1985) claims that 'acquisition' is internally driven within the learner, whereas 'learning' involves artificial and conscious force on the learner from the outside (cited in Foster-Cohen, 2001). Foster-Cohen suggests first language acquisition happens naturally and invisibly, but second language acquisition usually requires efforts (*ibid*). The major early SLA experts such as Lenneberg (1967), Penfield and Roberts (1959), Long (1990) and Bialystok (1986), whose influences are still tangible today, all considered that when it comes to SLA, it is always 'the earlier the better' in terms of cognitive development, accent and pronunciation. However, some researchers argued that an early start does not have significant impact on SLA (Krashen, 2003). Other factors, such as motivation, environment, learning strategies and teaching methods are also crucial (Ellis, 1994).

### **2.2.1 Maturational Factors**

The critical period hypothesis proposes that it is difficult (if not impossible) for older learners to achieve a native-like proficiency in terms of SLA (Dixon, 2009). The hypothesis has been subject to experimentation in various second language acquisition studies by comparing children's language performance with that of adults. It has been ascertained that some linguistic skills, such as pronunciation and listening comprehension, are acquired well at an early age. For others, like grammar and writing, it remains uncertain whether years of learning determines success, with mixed evidence about whether they are learnt better at a later age (Dixon, 2009;

Foster-Cohen, 1999). Ellis (1994) suggests that adult learners are better at using strategies to learn, thereby enhancing their rate of comprehension, especially in linguistic forms like suffixes or prefixes. However, this advantage will eventually be overtaken if young learners have greater exposure to the target language.

Nevertheless, some studies in second language acquisition research have given conflicting results over the issue of pronunciation. Some researchers have found better pronunciation in older subjects (Ekstrand, 1976; Snow & Hoefnagel-Hohle, 1977), whereas others have found that younger subjects are better (Cameron, 2004; Fathman, 1975; Flege & Fletcher, 1992). Ellis (1994) found that although the age factor is critical in the process of acquiring second language pronunciation, it is not significant in the process of learning grammatical competence and developing comprehension.

Lenneberg (1967) proposes that the critical period is responsible for the fact that “automatic acquisition from mere exposure to a given language seems to disappear after puberty and adolescents cannot overcome foreign accents easily” (p. 176). In addition, Scovel (1988) suggests that it is seldom the case that any individual beginning second language learning after puberty achieves a native accent. Long (1990) proposes rigidly that the acquisition of native-like accent is not possible by learners who begin learning the target language after the age of six. Taylor and Taylor (1990) deem that “languages appear to be acquired informally and mastered to native-like proficiency in the early years, before about age six, whereas they appear to be learned with conscious effort and mastered to non-native-like proficiency after about age fourteen” (p. 332). Furthermore, Fromkin and Rodman (1998) state there is a critical age for language acquisition if one wants to learn a language without external intervention or special teaching; after this period, the acquisition of the



grammar is difficult.

It seems that children can acquire a second language easily without any careful instruction. Krashen (1996) proposes that this is because L1 provides background knowledge to help make L2 input more comprehensible, thus accelerating L2 development and makes it seem effortless. Consequently, it is reasonable to assume that older learners can achieve native-like L2 proficiency with careful instruction. However, Krashen (2003) further clarifies that comprehensible input in a low anxiety situation is also important during early language acquisition. In addition, young learners are not necessarily faster at language acquisition, nor can an early start guarantee a native accent (Krashen, *ibid*). Singleton (2003) has suggested that the initial advantages of younger learners seem to yield productive language skills that are easily seen. Older learners, on the other hand, may enjoy long-term benefits under exposure to quality formal learning situations and with motivating learning strategies. From this view, the advantages of younger learners can be shared with older learners under certain conditions.

Other studies have shown that adults and adolescents achieve the same or even higher levels of second-language proficiency than children who are given the same or even more second-language exposure (Genesee & Lambert, 1983). It is because older learners apply comprehension strategies to actually ‘learn’ a language, unlike younger learners who tend to experience naturalisation of a language. Dixon argues that “the quality of input, not the age of the learner, is most important to ultimate L2 attainment” (p. 126). By this theory, L2 acquisition could begin at any age and the teacher’s role is critical in providing proper input to help students (young or old) achieve proficiency. In general, researchers agree with that older learners are faster in

the rate of acquisition, but younger learners are better in obtaining ultimate attainment (Foster-Cohen, 2001).

### **2.2.2 Affective Factors**

The affective domain has also been examined by some researchers in relation to second language acquisition. Teenagers or adults are more self-conscious than children as they speak both to define and to understand their self-identity (Scott & Ytreberg, 2003). From pre-adolescent to adolescent periods, although children regard themselves as separate and identifiable entities, they still feel insecure and need protection from adults. This is especially heightened when they face physical, cognitive, and emotional changes at this period (Brown, 2000). However, to learn (as well as to speak) a new language means to take on a new identity, for example pronunciation is one of the most observable aspects of self-representation while learning a language, so that teenagers are reluctant to change their pronunciation. In this way the children's advantage in accent-free acquisition can be explained. Yule (2010) finds that if there is a strong element of unwillingness or embarrassment while producing different sounds of a language, it may override whatever physical and cognitive abilities there are. Also, children are less afraid to sound ridiculous and they are willing to take risks when they learn a second (or foreign) language. In comparison to teenagers, children are more prepared to 'play with' the language they are learning and less constrained by affective factors (Scott & Ytreberg, 2003; Yule, 2010).

Oxford and Shearing (1994) state that motivation is another significant factor that determines success in learning a second or foreign language. Brown (2000) states

“it is easy in second language learning to claim that a learner will be successful with the proper motivation” (p. 160). According to Gardner (1985) in his social-educational model of language learning, motivation is the combination of three elements: effort, desire, and affection. Effort refers to the time which an individual is willing to spend on studying the language. Desire determines how proficient a learner will be in language learning. Affection describes how a learner reacts emotionally when encountering learning difficulties. It can be concluded that a successful language learner is motivated, with positive affection towards the language and eager to achieve the learning goals. Besides, he also makes an effort to learn the language and looks forward to achieving the learning outcomes.

Ellis (1994) notes that motivation and language achievement are correlated and they influence each other. A high level of motivation promotes long-lasting learning, but success in language learning also encourages intrinsic motivation. That is to say, extrinsic motivation leads to active learning and such motivation will be internalised as intrinsic motivation to accomplish higher achievement. On the other hand, low motivation may create a vicious circle. Accordingly, motivation often explains the success or failure that learners experience in second (or foreign) language learning. Principally, learners are less likely to learn much if they are stressed, uncomfortable, self-conscious or unmotivated. In addition to emotional affective factors, learners will be physically ‘affected’ by boring textbooks, unpleasant classroom atmosphere and tiring schedule of study or from work (Yule, 2010). All these negative feelings or experiences are affective factors that hinder SLA.

### **2.3 Language Policy**

Edwards (1985) states that the authorities can employ political power in education by making schools a medium of implementing ethnic or nationalist policies. In this respect, Kedourie (1961) comments that for nationalists, instead of transmitting knowledge, traditional wisdom, and social values, the purpose of schooling is to bend the will of the young to the will of the nation. Thus, like the army, schools become instruments of state policy. Similarly, there are some who argue that the modern western nation states were created in part through education and in part through enforcing one language as the central or dominant language of the state to forge a national identity and a national culture (Green, 1990).

Ricento (2006) believes that “language behaviour and social policy are ideologically encumbered, simply exposing these ideological formations is insufficient to justify enactment of particular policies” (p.11). Language users have ideologies of language and language use, which Blommaert (2006) defines as “conceptions of ‘quality’, value, status, norms, functions, ownership, and so forth” (p.241). These conceptions influence the behaviour of language users; in other words, speakers use language based on the ideologies they construct in social contexts and reproduce in the family. He thinks language use is ideologically stratified and strictly controlled. Schiffman (2006) further suggests that language ideologies are subconscious beliefs and assumptions about the social preference of a particular language that reflect values and patterns rooted in a society’s linguistic culture and people’s minds. As Paulston and Heidemann (2006) put, “A language policy is never simply and only about language” (p.305). Family language choice, too, is not a straightforward decision for parents.

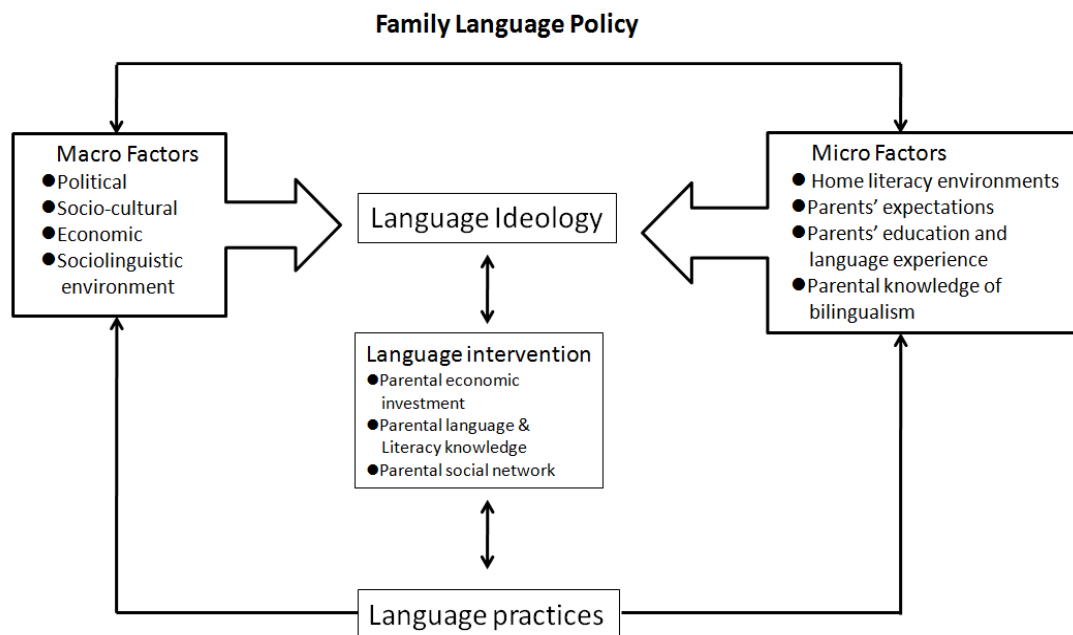
### **2.3.1 Family Language Policy**

Spolsky (2004) claims family language policy includes three components: language ideologies, language management, and language practices: language ideologies refer to beliefs behind language policies; language management to specific behaviours undertaken to intervene or influence language practices; and language practices to actual language use in different contexts and for various reasons. Silverstein (1979) defines language ideologies as “any sets of beliefs about language articulated by the users as a rationalisation or justification of perceived language structure and use” (p.193). Curdt-Christiansen (2009) explains these beliefs often include ideas about the status of specific languages, the appropriateness or inappropriateness of some expressions in particular contexts, and how language should be taught to children. Kroskrity (2004) thinks these beliefs about language, or language ideologies are “constructed from the sociocultural experience of the speaker” (p.496), so that language ideologies are multiple and diverse across cultures and individuals. Thus, the study of parents’ language ideologies can provide windows into why they emphasise specific language use in different contexts and how they respond to intervene or influence language practices.

Speakers’ (including parents and children) fluency in the language, advantages of using the language for themselves and for the audience also influence language choice. In multilingual or immigrant communities, how parents form their ideology about language use at home is complex (Edwards, 2004). If parents do not speak the dominant language, there is clearly no alternative but to use the mother-tongue. If partners speak different language, the initial language of communication may become the home language. If one partner speaks the second language more confidently than

the other, it also influences language choice. The status of languages affects language choice, too. Parents may be more willing to make effort to transmit “a high-status international language like French than a language spoken by a small number of people or in a country with little political power” (*ibid*, p.86).

Curd-Christiansen (2009) states language ideology is the driving force of family language policy. She suggests ideology formation can be discussed in two theoretical traditions: language policy and home literacy. Language policy focuses on macro-level issues, such as political ideology and economic involvement. She refers to language policy as ‘visible language planning’ because it is linked to state or other organised agencies. Home literacy focuses on micro-issues, such as home literacy environment and how different forms of capital possessed by a family can be transformed into educational attainment of children; she refers home literacy as ‘invisible language planning’ because it is determined by parents’ attitudes toward a specific language, but the media, social pressure and children’s counterparts play important roles too (*ibid*). She also provides a model to illustrate the interactive and bidirectional relationship between ideology, interventions and language practices at home.



**Figure 1- Curdt-Christiansen's (2009) Family Language Policy Model**

### 2.3.1.1 Language Maintenance

Mesthrie and Leap (2000) define language maintenance as “the continued use of a language in the face of competition from a regionally and socially more powerful language” (p.253). A heritage language can only survive when it is passed down from generation to generation; therefore family plays an important role in preserving the minority language. LetsMinnan (2009) claims, only when parents see the value of the heritage language and its accompanying culture can they transmit it successfully. Edwards (2004) indicates there are five reasons why the mother-tongue is maintained in the family. *First*, meaningful communication among the household is the top priority. *Second*, young children who speak a heritage language are more able to

explore their roots, such as literature, music and history, which “shape self--awareness, identity and relationships” (p.83). **Third**, some languages are related to religious activities. For instance, Gaelic literacy in Scotlang was linked to “Bible reading, home worship and the singing of metrical psalms” (p.84). **Fourth**, bilingual children are found to enjoy certain advantages over monolinguals. **Finally**, being able to speak different languages enjoys career advantages in a globalised world and is an increasing demand by employers. Lao (2004) researched a group of Chinese immigrant parents’ attitudes towards bilingualism in the USA according to their dominant language. She finds that Chinese-dominant parents believe a high level of bilingualism could provide their children better career opportunities than English-dominant parents do.

DeCapua and Wintergerst (2009) show that if parents insist on the policy consistently and with other supports, including language input from relatives, neighbours or friends and a print-rich environment, it forms and maintain the children’s positive attitudes towards the mother-tongue and being bilingual. Nevertheless, Schupbach (2009) discovers that among exogamous couples, children are more prone to speak the mother’s language because mothers are predominantly caregivers and spend more time with children in the process of language development and socialisation. For various reasons and in various ways, family members all seems to play a significant role in the first place of sustaining the heritage language (LetsMinnan, 2009). Studies show that three most commonly-found reasons for immigrants to maintain their mother-tongue are ‘geography’ (the closeness to the homeland), ‘motivation’ (positive language attitudes of the speakers), and ‘size’ (number of speakers and large community) (Canagarajah, 2008).



Canagarajah (2008) claims that the family has the power to protect the mother-tongue and influence the community, the social institutions and the state to promote its language, adopt supportive policies and allocate resources. Guardado (2006) also finds that the more culturally aware parents are, the more likely they are to raise children with a high level of command of the heritage language and a strong sense of attachment to their family's cultural roots. However, Spolsky (2004) argues that "the social and economic factors which are more likely to be the major sources of changes in language shift" (p. 215). Others, such as Hornberger and King (2001), put an emphasis on broader economic and institutional intervention for preserving endangered languages.

Fishman (2004) emphasises the responsibility of the family for language maintenance, but he also recognises that multilingualism cannot be intergenerationally maintained by the family alone; other social factors must also contribute. He not only sees the "family-home-neighbourhood-community" relationship (p.424) as the first and foremost factor, but also the schools, the mass media, the work area, the higher education sphere and the major agencies of government. Similarly, Scheele *et al* (2010) find language maintenance lies more on the amount of accessible sources in the heritage language - including television shows, newspapers, books, or picture books for young children - than socioeconomic factors. Guardado (2006) finds that the families in his study that had succeeded in language maintenance tend to enjoy a higher SES and higher formal educational background.

### **2.3.1.2 Code-switching**

Most commonly bilingual children acquire their mother-tongue at home and acquire/learn an official language at school. Bilingual children commonly switch languages from time to time for different reasons and such behaviour is called code-switching (LetsMinnan, 2009). Edwards (2004) finds that social factors, psychological factors and the topic of conversation influence language use too. For example, in the USA bilingual communities, children tend to initiate a conversation about something that happened in school in English and an incident that takes place in a community setting, such as the church or mosque, in the minority language. In contrast, Brenneman *et al* (2007) suggest code-switching depends on the characteristics of the audience rather than topics.

If a bilingual has not acquired the mother-tongue fully, a shift to a dominant language is likely to occur. If the domains in which the heritage language is used are limited, then such a language gradually goes to extinction gradually (LetsMinnan, 2009). DeCapua and Wintergerst (2009) recognise that parents are very influential in encouraging their children to speak two languages concurrently and to code-switch when necessary. They claim when children feel a status differential between their heritage language and official language, the loss of the heritage language is accelerated. Children must receive affirmation and purpose in their mother-tongue use, whether through the home, the school, or a combination of both.

### 2.3.1.3 Language Shift

Mesthrie and Leap (2000) refer to language shift as “the replacement of one language by another as the primary means of communication and socialisation within a community” (p.253). Very often heritage language maintenance is based largely on family-related social activities. Through such activities, an individual may establish an identity of ethnicity that may subsequently encourage continued use of the mother-tongue. Thus, Yeung *et al* (2000) assume that exposure to a rich language input increases the likelihood of first language maintenance. However, the maintenance of a heritage language is often related to public attitudes toward its political and socio-economic status. Spolsky (2004) points out three elements which determine the language use in a speech community: its frequent patterns of language practices, the beliefs or ideology about language use and specific efforts to influence language intervention, planning or management. If the language policy or education is not carefully planned by the government or the society does not have a supportive attitude towards heritage languages, it may lead to language shift and/or language death (LetsMinnan, 2009). LetsMinnan also finds out that speakers of minority languages are likely to stop using their languages and begin to identify with “less stigmatised groups” (p.589) if such uncomfortable feelings occur.

Batibo (2005) identifies five phases that a language goes through on its way to extinction. In phase 1, speakers of the threatened language use their mother-tongue in most domains while phase 2 is characterised by bilingualism, but with the mother-tongue as the predominant language. In phase 3, bilingualism continues but the second language takes over some of the domains in which in mother-tongue was previously used. Mother-tongue is restricted to family and cultural activities only in

this phase and there is more second language in code-switching behaviour. Phase 4 shows restricted use and competence in mother-tongue and it is used only in specific situations “such as initiation ceremonies, rituals and folkloric performances” and “the structural competence of mother-tongue as well as the stylistic expressions are reduced”. In phase 5 the mother-tongue is nearly replaced by second language (cited in LetsMinnan, 2009, p. 584). Edwards (2004) suggests that if parents ask in mother-tongue and children start to reply in second language, it can be seen as an indicator for language shift occurrence. In English-dominant countries, minority languages die out even faster. Some parents are afraid that the deficiency in the dominant language may be associated with poor labour market outcomes and switch their language use at home (Casey & Dustmann, 2008). However, Yeung *et al* (2000) suggested that the maintenance of a home language may be more beneficial for academic work than a shift to the dominant language.

Skutnabb-Kangas (2001) finds that languages today are dying out faster than ever before in human history. It is estimated that 90% of the world’s oral languages may be “dead or moribund (no longer learned by children) in a hundred years’ time” (p. 202) because 95% of the world’s spoken languages have fewer than 1 million native speakers and half of all the languages have fewer than 10,000 speakers. Therefore, she advocates that the right to be educated in the medium of the mother-tongue should be a human right. In short, heritage languages should exist in parallel with dominant languages and this takes effort from the family, the schools, the society and the government as a whole. Language education policy is not a question of ‘either-or’ but ‘both-and’. Furthermore, Krashen (2003) suggests that the first language can contribute background knowledge and literacy development which stimulates SLA, and also that advanced first language acquisition stimulates enhanced

cognitive development. Therefore, he claims that foreign language education should not weaken first language education.

### **2.3.2 Language Shift in Taiwan**

*“If ignorance and unfamiliarity promote hostility, then opportunities for personal contact between members of opposing groups should reduce hostility by increasing mutual knowledge and acquaintance” (Brewer & Miller, 1996, p. 107).*

Due to policies of Sinofication and monolingualism by the KMT, there are more receptive minority speakers than productive ones, particularly in younger generations. For instance, Jao and McKeever (2006) studied the inequalities in educational attainment among minority language speakers in Taiwan. They found the Hakka was the group which most likely to change their mother-tongue and speak Mandarin completely, aborigines the second, and the Minnan had the most positive attitude towards bilingualism among all minority groups. They also found the Hakka were more likely to speak Mandarin fluently than other minority-language speakers, which offered benefits in the labour market and might also help them access more formal schooling.

Tsao (1999) noted that owing to the inappropriate administration of the Provisional Provincial Government headed by Chen Yi, the enthusiasm about learning Mandarin was dampened. Monolingualism was enforced in an uncompromising way after Taiwan returned to the KMT government in Mainland China in 1945 and improper administration and corruption among the authorities led to the

Two-Two-Eight Incident<sup>19</sup> (or *Two-Twenty Eight Incident*, also known as 228 *Massacre*) on February 28, 1947 (Hsiao, 1997). This island-wide revolt resulted in a massacre and decades of purge ensued. The Incident seriously damaged the relationship between the Taiwanese people (especially the Minnan) and Mainlanders. It is difficult, Hsiao (1997) comments, to ignore the profound influence of the Two-Two-Eight Incident on Taiwan's politics and linguistic ecology.

During the 1970s when Taiwan faced difficulties in diplomatic affairs (for example, its seat in the UN was withdrawn in 1971; and the USA broke off diplomatic relations with Taiwan in 1978) and national unrest (opposition movements against the KMT's dominance), the KMT government perceived that national unity was crucial for Taiwan and for its residents to get through the difficult situation. Accordingly, in order to strengthen national solidarity, the KMT government implemented a much more rigorous monolingual language policy. The use, not to mention learning, of indigenous languages was suppressed. Speaking minority languages was regarded as a "sin" (Ou, 1995; cited in Law 2002, p.73) and pupils were subject to punishment at school. Moreover, pupils of indigenous groups were indoctrinated by the educational system with the idea that indigenous languages were inelegant and that it was a shame to speak such languages (*ibid*). Consequently, Mandarin-monolingualism succeeded at the expense of the indigenous languages. As Mandarin gained in popularity, the

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<sup>19</sup> In 1945, 50 years of Japanese rule ended, and in October the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration handed administrative control of Taiwan as a province to the KMT-administered Republic of China (ROC). However, 16 months of the KMT administration led to the widespread impression that the party was plagued by nepotism, corruption, and economic failure. Tensions increased between the Taiwanese and the ROC administration in Mainland China. The flashpoint came on February 27 in Taipei, when a dispute between a cigarette vendor and an officer of the Office of Monopoly triggered civil disorder and open rebellion that lasted for days. The uprising was put down by the military of the ROC violently in the end, but it had rooted enmity and tensions between the indigenous Taiwanese people and the Mainlanders who came to find refuge in Taiwan after 1949.

indigenous languages began to disappear, with the aboriginal languages declining the most rapidly, Hakfa close behind, and Minnan less noticeably (Tsao, 2000).

Law (2002) declares that language is the major means to preserve and reproduce cultural identity. However, if the language policy is not carefully implemented, it can be used as a social filter to exclude certain groups of people. Moreover, once symbolic power, which Bourdieu (2002) defines “as a power of constituting the given through utterances and is obtained through force” (p.170), is rooted in people’s mind, what people see and believe, act and react to are all influenced unconsciously. Then a language can be used to maintain or subvert the social order by those who declare the legitimacy of this language and maintain socio-political and educational hegemonic power by creating structures that neither account for nor meet the needs of multilingual society (Taylor & Sakamoto, 2009).

As a result, owing to the Sinofication and the Monolingual Policy, it is not surprising to see other vernacular languages, which were in competition with Mandarin, being given up or used minimally at home by parents, for the sake of a better future for their children. Therefore, parents gradually cease to commit to using mother-tongue at home. An unexpected consequence resulting from a monolingual policy is that people tend to have negative attitudes towards vernacular languages and also to hold negative stereotypes of minority groups. During the KMT’s regime, the government used mass media to devalue and discriminate against indigenous languages (Wang, 2003). According to Wang’s observation, often the villains in soap operas speak Minnan and people from the working class or poor families are always Minnan and aboriginal people. Besides, the Minnan are tagged as rude and less-educated, the Hakka as stingy and self-centred, and the aborigines as lazy and

drunkards. It has also become a stereotype that elegant and higher class people speak standard Mandarin, or sometimes English, and people of lower status speak Mandarin with a variety of accents.

Another factor which may account for language shift at home is that written Mandarin is particularly difficult to learn. Each spoken word or syllable is represented by an individual character so that learning to read and write in Mandarin means mastery of thousands of individual symbols, which may take a lot of effort and time (Li & Rao, 2000). In contrast, other vernacular languages in Taiwan are all spoken but do not have written systems. Some parents think speaking mother-tongue is not beneficial to children's literacy and therefore switch to speak Mandarin at home in the preparation for children's educational attainment (Chan, 1994).

## **2.4 Parental Involvement and Family Capital<sup>20</sup> in Education**

Numerous studies have recognised the importance of family influence on children's development. The first environment an individual encounters is that of the family and it is regarded as a microcosm of the society into which everyone will inevitably enter. Within a family, parents are their children's first and most influential teachers and they play significant roles in decisions about their children's future, especially education (Li, 2004). There are many studies indicating parental involvement strongly influences children's success in school (Chen, 2004; Conteh, 2008; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Hung, 2007; Marjoribanks, 2002; Wu, 2008). Parents believe that the chances for children's achievement can be maximised by

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<sup>20</sup> 'Family Capital' is used here and below as a shorthand form of reference to the aggregate of all forms of capital – for example, social, cultural and financial, using Bourdieu's (1997) categorisation – accessible to a family for transformation into educational advantage for the children of that family.



“interventions that empower parents and provide them with the necessary information and skills to be involved in their child’s education” (Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000, p. 104).

### **2.4.1 Parental Involvement and Children’s Educational Attainment**

Parents’ participation at a school is a clear sign to children of how much their parents value education. The results of many studies reveal that parental involvement has greater potential to improve pupil achievement and behaviour compared to those children whose parents do not involve themselves in their learning (Ascher, 1998; Epstein, 1995). Although parents of high SES have more time and assets to support and get involved in children’s school tasks, it does not mean that parents who cannot devote themselves fully to children’s education are responsible for children’s underachievement. McMillan (2005) has shown that, in Northern Ireland at least, parents’ attitudes towards education are more significant to children’s educational performance than parents’ educational or occupational status, material circumstances at home, and than types of schools children attend. She finds that parents with different expectations will influence their degrees of involvement in children’s education. On the other hand, Wei and Zhou’s (2003) study supports that parents’ behaviours at home rather than the family SES have direct impact on children’s academic achievement. In Taiwan, Chang and Huang (1999) discover that the learning performances of aboriginal children and their parents’ expectations are both relatively low compared to other ethnicities which may be related to their position as socially underprivileged in terms of education and family capital.

Senechal and LeFevre (2002) suggest the importance of parental involvement in children's learning has never been in doubt. They find a variety of research contexts has supported that parents' involvement in children's academic development can critically enhance their performance. Hung (2007) claims that in Taiwan parental involvement in children's education has been shown to be critical in children's success in the future. Baker and Stevenson (1986) distinguish the four areas in which parents usually get involved: knowledge of child's schooling, contact with school, homework strategies, and general academic strategies (cited in Kelly, 2001).

In the past decades, numerous studies have encouraged parents and suggested that in fact parental involvement is more critical in determining children's educational attainment than socio-economic status of family of origin (Argent, 2007; Epstein, 1995; Hung, 2007; Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000; Snow, 1991). Argent (2007) states parental involvement in children's academic study can promote positive behaviour and academic attainment in children. Also, parental support will help equip their children with the skills they need to ensure they have optimum life chances. In other words, as Argent notes, parents who actively support their children want them "achieve economic well-being" (p. 296).

Clark (1993) suggests there are six rules for parents (from different SES) to help children perform well in schools: 1) Establish a daily family routine; 2) Monitor out-of-school activities: for example, limit TV watching hours or arrange for after-school activities and supervision; 3) Model the value of learning, self-discipline, and hard work; 4) Express high but realistic expectations for achievement; 5) Encourage children's development and progress in school: for example, encouraging pupils to spend more time on homework usually leads indirectly to higher grades; and

6) Encourage reading, writing, and discussions among family members.

## **2.4.2 Family Socio-economic Status (SES) and Its Influence**

A child's socialisation, learning, and development are highly related to family background. A family is a unit which is prone to transfer different forms of capital from the parents' generation into educational achievement of the children's generation (Li, 2007). Coleman (1988) restates Bourdieu's theory that three kinds of capital are needed in a family for a child to achieve optimal development. These are physical or financial capital (material resources or their socioeconomic standing), human capital (parents' educational attainment that is embodied in their knowledge, skills and capabilities to act in certain social structures) and social capital (relationships or networks accessible in a society which support their needs at school and other settings).

The accumulation of family capital is not the determinant of the quality of a family's learning environment; instead, how the family makes best use of its existing capital(s) and in what ways it invests in their children's learning play a fundamental role in constructing a positive learning environment. Li's (2007) findings support Coleman's (1988) theory that not all investment of family capital is beneficial to children's education. Only the investment that addresses children's specific developmental needs (such as active engagement with reading and writing) can be translated into success in learning. In short, it does not mean that high levels of family capital are essential for a child to succeed in the future. Rather, if a family can utilise its capital, in any form, for the benefit of their children, it can facilitate or accelerate children's educational attainment more than those who do not. In general, children are

more liable to be exposed to experiences or academic-like environment which can facilitate intellectual development in more affluent families. For example, Ramey and Ramey (1994) find parents in poorer families tend to regard educational toys, games and books as luxuries and they may not have time, energy or knowledge to foster their children's development.

Peterson and Heywood (2007) find middle-class parents have greater awareness of how to be involved in children's education and maintain appropriate relationships between home and school. Although it may be inappropriate to draw precise parallels between social stratification in Chinese societies and those in the west, similar connections between social status and educational participation do exist. What Bourdieu called social capital in western countries is similar to '*guanxi*' in a Chinese context. '*Guanxi*' can be broadly used to describe the dynamic networks of personalised influence or personal connections. Wu (2008) finds the rising middle-class parents in China use '*guanxi*' to obtain a place for their child in the desired school because they realise educational credentials are "positional goods" (p.595). The consequences of it will be as Bourdieu (2002) asserts: "the combined effect of low cultural capital and the associated low propensity to increase it through educational investment condemns the least favoured classes to the negative sanctions of the scholastic market" (p.62).

Families with a high SES often have more access to a wider range of resources to promote and support the development of children. They can afford a wide range of books to arouse their children's interest and to learn at home, as well as high-quality child care or child development programmes to encourage their potential in a school setting. On the other hand, families with a low SES often lack the financial, social,

and educational support (Chang & Huang, 1999). Lower SES families may also have limited access to educational resources (from schools or society) that promote and support children's development. Also, parents with a lower SES may have skills deficiencies or often do not have time to accompany their children to read and learn altogether. In Japan, for example, LeVine and White (2003) find that it is very common for middle-class parents become involved in children's education actively since they were born. Schools and teachers advise parents on how best to help their children succeed in an academic environment and mothers may attend a mothers' class to help them to be more effective coaches in assist with children's education too.

Much research has proposed that children from higher SES families have better readiness for school than those from lower SES families because they are more familiar with cultural events, such as participating in concerts and plays, touring, paying a visit to the library as well as cultural centres, etc (Hsu, 1987; Wu, 2009). In Taiwan, higher SES families may put more emphasis on education and knowledge, while families with a lower SES may tend to emphasize the importance of occupational education in order to reduce poverty (Chen, 2000). Li (2004) finds Chinese immigrant parents in Canada have higher expectations of their children's achievement and will pay more attention to their children's education if they have higher education degrees. However, parents with lower education levels usually have inadequate knowledge which negatively affects their decisions regarding their children's development and learning. Lucas (1999) notes social class effects continue in the United States, where pupils' poor academic performance is associated with race and ethnicity.

In the context of Taiwan, the total capital available to a family does not significantly determine pupils' achievement in the primary school stage. In contrast, it is not until children enter secondary or tertiary schools that a family's SES becomes critical (Jao & McKeever, 2006). The higher a child progresses through the educational system, the more obvious the influence of social inequalities becomes. Therefore, various forms of capital are the tools parents use to ensure their children become a member of the advantaged group (Bowden & Doughney, 2010). In Taiwan, the gross enrolment rates to college/university of the age group (18-21) reached 82% in 2009 (MOE, 2010) and an undergraduate degree is considered a necessity for white-collar jobs nowadays. As a result, as Lauder and Hughes (1999) note, echoing Hirsch (1977), "When too many individuals hold that good or credential at that particular level, it loses value and individuals will try to gain advantage by studying for a credential at an even higher or more prestigious level" (p. 24). Since a normal university degree cannot guarantee a graduate to get a good job in Taiwan, one needs to have an undergraduate degree from one of the elite universities (usually national universities), or even get a Master's or Doctorate degree to be competitive enough in the job market (Hung, 2007). Entering those elite universities requires outstanding performance in secondary schools. "To secure a place in the key school, one has to learn more specialties than others in order to be "getting ahead or avoiding social 'congestion' in the competition for quality education" (Brown, 2006, p. 382). It becomes a normal phenomenon that if they can afford to, parents will do their best to support all sorts of extra-curricular lessons, to foster music or art talents of their children or send their children to 'cram schools' to preview and review compulsory subjects after school. This encourages a popular conception that good parenting requires financial and material support in education and these substantial supports are more valued than love or other affective aspects as being 'good parents' in Taiwan

(Lo, 2007).

According to Jao and McKeever's (2006) research, students' from higher SES families are more likely to enter elite universities than those from comparatively lower SES families. As Bowden and Doughney (2010) put it, "Students from high socio-economic backgrounds have an advantage in securing entry into higher education because they have been brought up in a socio-cultural environment that is more closely aligned to that in which exists in the higher education system" (p. 119). Students from low SES backgrounds are more likely to study for lower-level qualifications at vocational training institutions rather than higher certificate levels.

What is interesting to notice is that, in Taiwan, Jao and McKeever (2006) discover not only does a family's socio-economic background play a central role in children's educational achievement, but the father's education is also significant. Young children's development has been found to correlate significantly with their fathers' occupational prestige, level of education, and occupational class. Furthermore, they claim that children whose fathers are better-educated are more likely to pursue a tertiary degree from either a college or a university (*ibid*).

### **2.4.3 Parental Expectation and Attitude**

Several authors have investigated parental attitudes to education in Western societies. McMillan (2005) claims that parents' attitudes to education are the most crucial factor in their children's educational attainment. In other words, parents of high achieving pupils set higher standards for their children's educational achievements than parents of low achieving pupils. Reynolds *et al* (1993) discovered

that children's academic achievement and social adjustment are correlated with parental expectations of their children's educational attainments and parental satisfaction with their children's education at school. Parents who expect highly of their children and get involved in education may influence children's academic attainment; pupils who perform better and get higher grades than others are more inspired to obtain higher degrees (Bowden & Doughney, 2010). Goldenberg (2006) finds many immigrant parents in the USA are economically stressed and cannot support their children's learning at school; but they see formal schooling as the principal means of social and economic mobility and security for their children and expect their children to succeed. Presumably, parents with different SES backgrounds have different expectations and attitudes towards education and accordingly it influences the degree they can get involved in their children's education.

Gao (2006) claims that parents in East Asian contexts, in particular Chinese parents, have been well-documented for their zealous involvement in and high expectations for their children's academic development. Chinese parents tend to value credentials highly and set high expectations for their children to achieve in terms of efforts and outcomes. Similarly, LeVine and White (2003) find that 'high achievement' has become a standard expectation among Japanese parents; they are influenced by cultural ideologies that prescribe sharing home resources with children and devoting time and attention to their nurturing. They believe setting high expectations helps children achieve better because the selection of the fittest does not depend on the innate capacity but on "commitment and hard work" (p.171).



#### **2.4.4 Parents' Educational Background and Their Maintenance of Home-school Relationship**

The relationship between a child's family background and his/her educational success is clearly quite complex (and may vary significantly across different cultures). What we can see from the above literature is that children from economically privileged backgrounds more often outperform their less advantaged counterparts. Kelly (2001) notes that children from higher SES families are often placed in high track classes because middle-class parents play a more active role in managing their children's study than parents who are less educated or financially disadvantaged. He finds that better-educated parents are more active in dealing with school and handling children's learning because of their own educational experience compared to less-educated parents and they tend to see "education as a shared enterprise and scrutinized, monitored, and supplemented the school experience of their children" (*ibid*, p. 4). Montgomery (2008) suggests that as the parents' educational levels increase, so do their children's educational achievements. McMillan (2005) also finds that the higher parents' educational background is, the more confident and more active parents are in engaging with children's learning.

Home-school relationship is also important in children's performance. Ainscow *et al* (2007) point out that the relationship between families and schools should be taken into consideration when judging a family's capacity to promote the achievement of desired outcomes from children. Patrikakou and Weissberg (2000) also indicate that effective school-home relationships can be helpful for students' success because they can provide practical and effective skills parents need to be involved in children's education. Montgomery (2008) also claims that when schools work together with

families to support children's learning, they tend to succeed not just in school, but throughout life. In fact, he finds that the most significant predictor of a pupil's achievement in school is not merely parents' SES, but the extent to which that pupil's family is able to support learning. Henderson and Berla (1994) suggest that pupils are more likely to perform better if parents play four key roles, which are teachers who create a literate home environment, supporters who contribute their knowledge to the school, advocates who work to make the system more responsible, and decision-makers who participate in curriculum committees or advisory councils, in their children's learning.

#### **2.4.5 Family Factors in Children's SLA**

Apart from biological and affective factors which are important for SLA, the influence of family-related factors, such as parental socioeconomic status (SES), parental involvement, and parental expectation, are considered to be significant for language learning as well. In a Chinese context, influenced by Confucianism, education is believed to be the key to changing one's social status, social class, and income (Li, 2007). English is considered to be indispensable in education in Taiwan nowadays. As a result, parents can be expected to be very concerned about their children's English learning, including concerns such as when and where it takes place.

Scheele *et al* (2010) explain that SES usually refers to "parents' formal education, the degree of symbolic content of their jobs, and the availability of economic and cultural resources" (p.135). They declare these factors all are considered to directly or indirectly influence children's language development. They find the higher educated parents are, the more they are concerned about children's

literacy development and the more prone they are to provide resources in second language learning.

Li (2007) carried out research on a group of Chinese immigrants from different social backgrounds in Canada and studied the relationship between family capital and children's second language acquisition. His finding is similar to Marks *et al*'s (2006) that parents' human and social capital is more critical than financial capital in supporting children's learning. In Li's study, parents with academic occupations or with a higher degree place more emphasis on children's literacy in both Chinese and English and give better assistance in terms of knowledge or resources (books or help from other family members) than those with better financial capital. Li suggests that parental human capital is central for the families to transfer other forms of family capital into their children's language learning. It is not economic class, but "the educational and occupational (job circumstances) factors that shaped the parents' expectations for and involvement in schooling" (*ibid*, p.296).

What is interesting to note is that Evans *et al* (2010), on the other hand, find a slightly different indicator of children's educational performance in their study across 27 nations, including Eastern and Western, the poor and the rich, under Communism or capitalism and from past to present. They discover that having university educated rather than unschooled parents is a great advantage for children as growing up in homes with many books. They also find children growing up with books get 3 years more schooling than children from bookless homes, regardless of their parents' education, occupation, and class and the evidence is especially strong in China.

He (2009) has researched the social construction of proficiency in China and found English is an 'invisible capital' which symbolises one's power and status. As she puts it, "English is linguistic capital in the context of China because it has consequences- it can be converted to other forms of capital (economic and symbolic) - it 'buys' prestige, power and consequent economic positioning" (p. 3). What she found in China echoes Bourdieu's (1990) assertion that when a language (mother-tongue or foreign) gains "legitimacy and arbitrary truth" (p.112) in a given linguistic domain through either upbringing or schooling, it gains symbolic power and functions as symbolic capital and legitimate linguistic capital. Therefore, He (2009) discovers that parents from higher SES in China endeavour to help their children learn English and form an invisible circle which excludes access to others who do not speak English.

Gao (2006) also suggests that parents' direct or indirect involvement has significant influence on children's English learning in China and classifies parents' behaviours according to their involvement into six types: "language advocates, language learning facilitators, language teachers' collaborators, language learning advisors, language learning coercers, and language learning nurturers" (p.290). Lamb (2008) discovers that social, cultural, and economic capital play an important role in facilitating and sustaining children's learning practices and their motivation to learn English in Indonesia. He suggests that family capital may accelerate or slow down the process of English learning of the child. Wei and Zhou (2003) find that children whose parents involve themselves more in their education get assimilated into American culture and learn English better among Chinese immigrant families. In Taiwan, Oladejo (2006) finds that children's of wealthy parents tend to learn English earlier and better.

## **Chapter 3 – Research Methodology**

The research design and implementation are presented and justified in detail below. In outline, however, the research takes the form of a multiple case study in which parents with children at a single language school are asked to complete a short questionnaire and then take part in individual interviews.

### **3.1 Research Paradigm**

Paradigms, which Neuman (2006) defines as “a basic orientation to theory and research” (p.81), are different ways to observe, measure, and understand social phenomenon. Corbetta (2003) suggests three types of paradigm: *positivism*, *post-positivism*, and *interpretivism*. Three fundamental concepts underlie the decision of which research paradigm to adopt, namely, ontology, epistemology and methodology (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Ontology refers to the philosophical analysis of reality or existence; epistemology is the study or a theory of the nature and grounds of knowledge, especially with reference to its limits and validity; and methodology concerns the science and theory of methods to discover new knowledge (Time Dictionary, 2009). Corbetta (2003) suggests that these can be explained in three simple questions:

*The ontological question is the question of ‘what’. It asks if social phenomena are ‘things in their own right’ or ‘representations of things’. The epistemological question is the question of the relationship between the ‘who’ and the ‘what’ (and the outcome of this relationship). It regards the knowability of social reality and, above all, focuses on the relationship*

*between the observer and the reality observed. The methodological question is the question of 'how' (how can social reality be studied?). It therefore regards the technical instruments of the cognitive process. (p. 12)*

This research enquiry is interpretivist in its underlying paradigm. With regard to ontological considerations, it is constructivist because its ontological position asserts that “social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors” (Bryman, 2008, p. 19). As discussed in Chapter 1, the research hypothesises that parents’ decision and parental behaviour with regard to their children’s language development arises from the meanings they give to their personal experiences of and interaction with social forces and phenomena. As for epistemological considerations, it is “non-dualist” (Corbetta, 2003, p. 24) because my research enquiry tends to be “an interpretive one in search of ‘meaning’, in which the central categories are those of value, meaning, and purpose” (*ibid*, p.24). Methodologies are commonly presented as a dichotomous pair, quantitative and qualitative methodologies, which hold distinctive philosophical positions and contrast different research paradigms. In my research enquiry, a qualitative approach is adopted because it aims to explore “persons’ lives, lived experiences, behaviours, emotions, and feelings as well as about organisational functioning, social movements, cultural phenomena, and interactions between nations” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 11).

Table 1 (adapted from Creswell, 2007) provides a detailed comparison between the two methodologies, which further confirms the qualitative nature of my own study. Creswell claims the ontological issue in qualitative research relates to multiple and subjective realities, as seen by participants in the study. He suggests that evidence of multiple realities is better presented by the use of direct quotes from

individuals to present individuals' original perspectives. In my own study, for example, while analysing data, I use original texts in Mandarin from interviews to reveal parents' opinions in order not to lose meanings or misinterpret in the process of translation. Translation is only carried out when a direct quotation is inserted in this thesis. With respect to epistemological assumptions, Creswell indicates conducting a qualitative study means that researchers try to get as close as possible to the participants being studied. In order to lessen distance between parents and me, I spent time in the language school being studied. How I collaborate and acquainted myself with the parents and became an insider in the language school will be explained in detail in the next section.

Finally, the relationship between theory and my research enquiry is inductive; although I begin with a broad hypothesis that language decisions emerge from the meanings that people construct from their experiences, I do not set out to test a specific theory with regard to language decisions and use. Bryman (2008) points out that it is appropriate to adopt an inductive approach if the theory is to represent the findings.

**Table 1: Characteristics of Quantitative and Qualitative Research on a Continuum in the Process of Research**

<b>Quantitative Characteristics</b>	<b>Steps in the Process of Research</b>	<b>Qualitative Characteristics</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Description and explanation oriented</li> </ul>	<b>Identifying a Research Problem</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Exploratory and understanding oriented</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Major role</li> <li>● Justification for the research problem and specification for the need for the study</li> </ul>	↓ <b>Reviewing the Literature</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Minor role</li> <li>● Justification for the research problem</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Specific and narrow</li> <li>● Measurable observable data</li> </ul>	↓ <b>Specifying a Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● General and broad</li> <li>● Participants' experiences</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Predetermined instruments</li> <li>● Numeric (numbered) data</li> <li>● Large number of individuals</li> </ul>	↓ <b>Collecting Data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● General, emerging form</li> <li>● Text or image data</li> <li>● Small number of individuals or sites</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Statistical analysis</li> <li>● Description of trends, comparison of groups, or relationships among variables</li> <li>● A comparison of results with predictions and past studies</li> </ul>	↓ <b>Analyzing and Interpreting Data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Text analysis</li> <li>● Description, analysis, and thematic development</li> <li>● The larger meaning of findings</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Standard and fixed</li> <li>● Objective and unbiased</li> </ul>	↓ <b>Reporting and Evaluating Research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Flexible and emerging</li> <li>● Reflexive and biased</li> </ul>

( Adapted from Creswell, 2008: 52)

### **3.2 Research Design**

As Flyvberg (2001) notes, the purpose of social science is to understand how people and societies interact in different contexts. Therefore, “context counts” (*ibid*, p.38). He suggests that understanding values and interests- and how they differ among parties- plays an important role in social science. Here I am trying to find out



how parents make their decisions about their children's language education based on their perceptions and interpretations of contexts, pressures, needs, and so on. It is the meanings they give to the world around them that influences how they have consciously, subconsciously or even unconsciously acted upon their children's language development. Various social and personal (or what Curdt-Christiansen (2009) called macro- and micro-) factors together form the basis for their decision-making. These are the core considerations influencing my research design, as discussed below.

### **3.2.1 Research Approach**

My study is a multiple-case study. Carden (2009) recommends that case studies are particularly useful in answering 'how' and 'why' questions, whereas a survey is used to answer 'what' questions'. Yin (2009) sees 'how' and 'why' as explanatory questions that lead to the need of the use of case studies. According to Stake (2000), case studies can prove invaluable in obtaining information and adding to understanding, extending experience, and increasing conviction about a subject. Further, the case-study approach is mostly suitable for single researchers because they can explore a research topic at some depth within a series of steps and in a small area within a limited time. A case-study usually targets the interaction between causes and events (*ibid*). Allowing researchers to focus on an existing event or situation and to identify the interactive processes at work is the strong point of this approach. Yin (2009) defines the case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p.18). A case study, then, can be applied to explore subjects and issues where relationships

may be ambiguous or uncertain, and is often used qualitatively. Gray (2004) argues that this approach is particularly useful when the research is trying to uncover a relationship between a phenomenon and the context in which it is occurring, especially when 'how' and 'why' questions are being asked about a contemporary set of events.

Here my interest is to explore the how and the why, and a case-study is the most suitable approach for this research enquiry for four reasons. **First**, a case study is not only useful for describing events but also for explaining the cause and effect relationships in a specific situation. The great advantage of the case-study approach is that it enables researchers to focus on a particular event and it can thus capture the unique features that may otherwise be lost or too complex to be found in larger scale research (e.g. surveys). These unique features may hold the key to understanding the situation (Cohen *et al*, 2007).

Owing to this, the case study approach is particularly suitable for this research enquiry to explore the underlying factors which are considered to be influential in forming parents' perceptions and expectations of mother-tongue and English learning and how these influence their behaviours about children's language education. **Second**, the research questions I wanted to answer were explanatory in nature. I was trying to answer why and how parents act towards their children's language education; I did not target finding out what children's learning outcomes are in relation to different degree of parental involvement. Therefore, it is suitable to adopt a case study approach. **Third**, being a sole researcher with limited resources within restricted time, it is better that I adopt a case-study approach for practical reasons (Bell, 1999). **Fourth**, the case study approach has not been universally accepted because it is

difficult (and dangerous) to generalise the findings (Yin, 2009). I do not have the ambition to generalise my findings. Instead, I wish to discover if parents from different background have similar or different perceptions of, expectations towards and behaviours concerning their children's language education in a single language school and understand why and how they did so. Descriptive generalisation to a wider population- such as 'all' parents in Taiwan- is not my aim. The explanations that emerge may be transferable to other contexts, but that is for future research to explore.

Based on the interesting results I discovered in one of my EdD assignments, the framework of this research enquiry started with occasional short talks with parents. Then I decided to explore parents' perceptions and behaviours in more depth and confirmed that a multiple-case study would be interesting and appropriate because each single case is unique but also belongs to a particular collection of cases or examples of a phenomenon (Stake, 2006). Stake claims that each embedded case can be studied to learn about its "self-centring, complexity, and situational uniqueness" (p.6). Yin (2009) claims that the data gathered from a multiple-case study is usually more "compelling and robust" than a single case (p.53) because each case is a representation of a 'whole story'. Therefore, a multiple-case study enables me to cover different cases within one language school and then to draw a set of "cross-case" discussions (*ibid*). This multiple-case study is similar to what Stake (2003) calls a 'collective case study' because it is an "instrumental study extended to several cases" and understanding these cases would help me know more about underlying factors which influence parents' language ideologies and behaviours.

### 3.2.2 Participants

There are two types of private English ‘*busiban*’: private English cram schools and private English language schools. Private English cram schools usually apply traditional, lecturing teaching methods to teach English as a school subject. They are test-driven because their main objective is to help pupils gain high scores in school tests, entrance exams or other qualification exams (e.g. the GEPT). They try to squeeze in everything that may appear on tests, mainly grammar and vocabulary, and tend to ignore listening and speaking skills; this is how this type of schools gains its name as ‘cram school’. This type of ‘*busiban*’ can enrol as many as three hundred students in one English class. In contrast, the core objective of private English language schools is to equip pupils with English language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), not merely to excel in school tests. They have their own teaching materials and curricula. Different language schools also use different teaching methods to attract and motivate pupils. The student number is normally no more than 20 in one class.

There are 748 private English cram schools and 413 private English language schools in Taichung in 2010. This private English language school in which I carried out the study was chosen for two reasons. **First**, the uniqueness of the language school was the major concern. Because I aim to explore parental ideologies of language and language learning, and parents who send their children to this type of English ‘*busiban*’ are more concerned about their children’s English learning in terms of four skills, not just about English grammar or contents from school textbooks. **Second**, among all English language school in Taichung, this language school is the only one which allows parents to sit in the class and learn with their children for free

at the same time. The director believes that parental involvement is crucial to the success of children's English learning because they can help children review at home as well as create an English learning environment outside the class. Her belief aroused my interest in whether parents would become involved more in their children's English learning. Also, since parents are allowed to sit in every class, accessibility to parents was not a problem. *Third*, the director's willingness to participate was also another consideration. I had been working in the language school for several years and the director is very supportive of academic research. She was willing to help me when I first approached her to conduct my research.

The class on which I focused was chosen through consultation process with the director of the language school. Criteria for selection were that *first*, it is comparatively a big class in this language school, with 15 pupils, so there was more possibility to include parents from different ethnicities; *second*, carrying out 15 interviews is manageable for me as the sole researcher in this study; and *third*, there were two pupils in this class from low-income family who were sponsored by the language school to learn English for free<sup>21</sup>. Therefore, it was more likely I could collect data from parents from different SES backgrounds. In recognition of the suggestion from the literature that each case is unique and serves as a part of the multiple embedded case study, therefore, I aimed to include all the cases in this class (Stake, 2006).

Two further cases were chosen, in line with Yin's (2009) "theoretical replication" strategy (p.54). These were chosen from different cities - Taipei and

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<sup>21</sup> The language school gave a certain quota to pupils from low-income families to learn English for free. The incomes of those families were examined by the Bureau of Welfare in Taichung.

Chiayi, at the opposite ends of Taiwan- to add a broader scope to the geolinguistic influence that my data suggested was observable. Taipei, it was felt, might be an environment in which there were strong economic and political influences on language choice, particularly favouring Mandarin and English. Chiayi, an agrarian city in the south, however, is an area in which Minnan is more widely used. It is recognised that no generalisations can be made about geographical-linguistic influences from just two cases. They were seen, rather, as exploratory and potentially suggestive of additional influences in language choice.

### **3.2.3 Data Collection Strategy**

The class chosen was taught on Tuesdays and Fridays by two teachers, one native English teacher and one Taiwanese teacher. In order to be less intrusive to parents and pupils, I sat in the class on every Friday each week for a month in order to get acquainted with parents who came to lessons. After a month, I volunteered to help the Chinese teacher review pupils' homework via telephone for two more months before the interviews were carried out<sup>22</sup>. The reason for helping the teacher to do the telephone review was to become familiar with parents and pupils; I did not intend to judge or interfere pupils' learning outcomes. During these two months, I also tried to modify the questionnaire and initial interview questions for parents and a pilot was carried to check the validity and reliability of the research.

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<sup>22</sup> In this language school, the Chinese teachers need to telephone pupils to ensure they review the materials at home. The telephone review usually is done once a week, in between the classes. It can be done in various forms. For example, pupils might be asked to read the texts and answer some questions or recite new vocabulary, etc.

### **3.2.3.1 Methods**

In this research enquiry, two instruments were used to gather data: a questionnaire and semistructured interviews. The main method was the interview and the questionnaire served as an additional tool primarily to gather background information.

#### **Questionnaire**

Some background information was gathered through self-completion questionnaires in advance using closed questions which would be easier and quicker to answer. In addition, in order to prevent what Bryman calls “respondent fatigue” (2008, p. 138) while carrying out long-lasting interviews in the next stage, I decided to give a questionnaire about background information first. The questionnaire contains two parts. The first part was to explain the purpose of study and gather information about parents’ educational backgrounds, jobs, family annual income and language use at home. It had 13 closed questions (both ‘fill-in’ and ‘tick’ questions). A covering letter explained my research purpose in details and was also used to explore willingness to participate in the interview and to identify time and place (see *Appendix 1*). The second part of the questionnaire was used to elicit a linguistic profile of the family and the language attitudes of the interviewees, which I used as background information to inform the subsequent interview. Specifically, the second part was adopted from Baker’s (1992) questionnaire about attitudes on English and Welsh. It had three sub-sections: the first section contained questions about the languages in which the respondent talks to different people and the language in which certain people talk to them. The second section asked how the respondent rated

Mandarin, mother-tongue (if applicable) and English while engaging in various activities. The third section evaluated whether the respondent agreed or disagreed with certain statements about their perceptions of different languages (see *Appendix 2*).

### **Interview**

In social science, Fontana and Frey (2000) believe the interview is the most widely-adopted instrument for researchers undertaking qualitative studies, noting that we live in “the world of the interview society” (p.646). They believe that more and more qualitative researchers are realising that interviews are not neutral tools of data gathering but “active interactions between two (or more) people leading to negotiated, contextually based results” (*ibid*, p.646). However, it is not the familiarity but rather the flexibility that attracts most qualitative researchers (Bryman, 2008). According to Wu (2002), a more complete profile for tapping one’s beliefs can be achieved by a combination of quantitative multiple-choice tests and qualitative research techniques, such as interviews. Bryman (2008) believes that although interviewing, the transcription of interviews and the analysis of transcripts are time-consuming, they make more sense to researchers than do numbers. To access the underlying influences on parental behaviour requires in-depth exploration of their experiences and interpretations, which is a particular strength of semi-structured or unstructured interviews. Fontana and Frey (2005) further discuss different types of interview, such as individual, face-to-face verbal interchange, telephone, or face-to-face group interchange; the interview can also be structured, semistructured or unstructured.



Bryman (2008) claims that semistructured interviews and unstructured interviews are better than structured interviews in qualitative research for gathering detailed, in-depth, intimate information. Also, he claims unstructured interviews are more like having a conversation with interviewees and researchers need to identify useful issues immediately and go on exploring these in depth, which requires more experienced researchers. In contrast, interviewers who adopt a semistructured interview can prepare a question list which contains all the issues that need to be covered. The process is more flexible than a structured interview, but the data gathered is likely to be more relevant than in an unstructured interview. In addition, interviewers have leeway to decide whether to further explore particular topics raised or not.

Clearly, certain types of interviewing are better suited to particular kinds of situations and I must be aware of “the implications, pitfalls, and problems” (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 667) of the type of interview I choose. Since I was not going to research anyone’s life history, and neither am I an experienced researcher, I decided that semistructured interview is a good strategy to explore and enrich the data of this multicase study, and gain a more in-depth look at parents’ perceptions, expectations and behaviours. A list of interview questions is provided in *Appendix 3*.

There are two reasons for choosing semi-structured, instead of unstructured, interviews. **First**, unstructured interviews are like loose conversations and I did not intend to have free conversations with interviewees and risk gathering meaningless data. After I completed the literature review, I wanted to focus on the influential factors in relation to the macro domain (such as socio-cultural, political or economic factors), micro domain (such as home literacy environments, parental expectations or

involvement), and language intervention domain (such as parental economic investment, parental language literacy knowledge) in particular. Therefore, a list of specific topics and questions was helpful to ensure the validity of the data gathered, which is the format of semistructured interviews. *Second*, I planned to explore factors within these three domains specifically; however, questions which were not listed on the interview list might be asked as I could ask interviewees to elaborate on their answers while the interview was going on. I was also interested in discovering other unforeseen influential factors. Semistructured interview provides both interviewers and interviewees a great deal of leeway over how and on what to interact. Eliciting flexible answers within limited domains of questions was my major concern.

### **3.2.3.2 Pilot**

In order to make best use of the questionnaire and ensure the success of the interview, a pilot study was done to test the procedure. The questionnaire was first given to test whether self-completion questionnaire was able to collect the information I wanted; then a pilot interview was carried out to see if the interview questions were clear and answerable in order to fully explore parents' language ideologies and language management and avoid leading or biased questions (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). Also, it was used to practice my interview skills in terms of clarifying perceptions and exploring details. The questionnaire turned out to be successful in gathering enough background information; therefore, no alteration was needed.

The pilot interview was implemented twice after the observation in class. The parent was from another class in the same language school. The mother volunteered to be interviewed and the pilot was carried out successfully. The main purpose of pilot

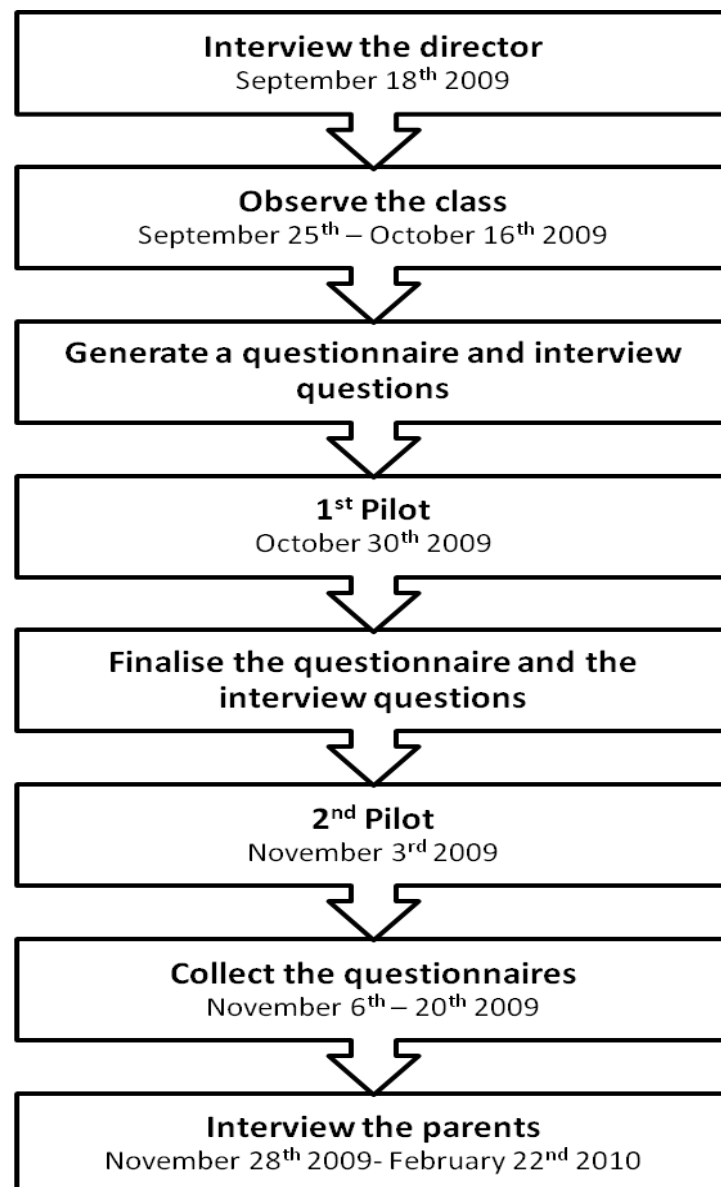
interview was to check if I could gather the data I wish to collect, potentially sufficient to answer my research questions. Some of the interview questions were rephrased because some were too broad (e.g. How is your child's English learning?) to which she tended to answer 'it is okay' and I had to make effort to explore 'what did she mean by 'okay'?', 'did she set targets for her child?' or 'did her child's English learning meet her expectation?'. Therefore, I realised the interview questions must be specific but not too narrow, otherwise the response might stop quickly or they might give vague answers. Also, the order of asking questions was changed. During the piloting, I asked 'home language policy' first (e.g. what language(s) do they speak at home? Do the parents plan not to speak mother-tongue to the child at home on purpose?), but it occurred to me that the interviewee seemed to treat these questions as background information gathering and did not think about the driving force underpinning the decisions. Therefore, I changed the order and asked the 'national language policy' first because it made the link between their 'planning' of home language policy to 'national language policy'.

In addition, I asked questions about English learning first and then mother-tongue teaching in the pilot interview, but I thought it would be more appropriate to ask mother-tongue teaching first and then English learning because the interviewee talked more about English learning than the teaching of mother-tongue. She gave me the impression that English learning was more important than mother-tongue teaching to her so that she became reluctant to talk in the second part of the interview. Therefore, I thought it might be a better organisation that I explored questions about mother-tongue teaching first before parents got tired in the interview.

For the second pilot interview, I only asked those questions which were added or amended and I did not run the whole interview again. Another gain from the second time of the pilot interview was that I was better at encouraging the interviewee to talk spontaneously. I found it was a good tactic that I started the interview by asking the general learning conditions, behaviours or attitudes, which was related to the interviewee's child particularly. It encouraged the interviewee to talk more and made the interview less formal, threatening or 'academic'. After the pilot interview, I learned a lesson that parents are more willing to talk about their child than general education or policy. The new interview questions and order are presented in *Appendix 4*.

### **3.3 Process of Data Collection**

The figure below illustrates the order and timing of the data collection procedures.



**Figure 2. Procedure of the Data Collection**

### 3.3.1 The Questionnaire

The Chinese teacher handed every child my questionnaire along with the covering letter. All the questionnaires were returned within two weeks together with the follow-up process included telephoning parents to confirm the interview and scheduling the time and place. There were 15 pupils when I first observed the class. By the time I collected the questionnaire, one pupil had dropped out. Therefore, 14 questionnaires were collected. Four parents did not want to be interviewed in the beginning but after I approached them again and explained the purpose of my study and the importance of their participation, two of them agreed to participate. Carden (2009) suggests that selecting agreeable parents is also helpful when collecting useful data because they are more willing to talk while interviewing. Therefore, I did not approach the last two parents again because they stated clearly that they did not have time to participate in ‘academic research’. Coincidentally but possibly detrimental to my findings, these two parents were from a lower-middle SES background according to their family annual income. Finally, 12 parents were interviewed. I recognised that I did not have any parents from aboriginal groups nor all types of mixed ethnicity couples. Mainlander and Minnan people make up about 80% of the population and not many aboriginal people live in Taichung.

Furthermore, it was decided to add two further cases from two different geolinguistic areas in order to broaden the sociolinguistic context of the study. It is recognised that no descriptive generalisations can be made about geolinguistic influences from just two additional cases (see Section 3.2.2, above). In a sense, I was trying to locate my study in a wider context. I did not plan to generalise my finding to Taiwan, but possibly to suggest a hypothesis, the generalisation of which could be

open to further research. Background information of these 14 cases is shown in Table 2.

	<b>Father's ethnicity</b>	<b>Father's degree</b>	<b>Father's job</b>	<b>Mother's ethnicity</b>	<b>Mother's degree</b>	<b>Mother's job</b>	<b>Family annual income</b>
Tracy	Minnan	University	Doctor	Mainlander	Master	Teacher	high
Max	Minnan	Senior Vocational	Vendor	Vietnamese	Junior High	Housewife	low
Monica	Mainlander	Master	Teacher	Hakka	College	Office work	upper-middle
Candy	Hakka	College	Businessman	Minnan	University	Housewife	high
Jean	Hakka	Senior High	Factory worker	Minnan	University	Office work	middle
Vera	Minnan	Senior High	Public service	Minnan	Senior Vocational	Factory worker	upper-middle
Ray	Minnan	Senior Vocational	Small business owner	Minnan	Senior Vocational	Housewife	upper-middle
Eva	Minnan	College	Salesman	Minnan	College	Housewife	middle
Kevin	Minnan	College	Businessman	Minnan	College	Businesswoman	middle
Leo	Minnan	Senior Vocational	Factory worker	Minnan	Senior Vocational	Housewife	low
Barry	Minnan	Master	IT industry	Minnan	College	Housewife	upper-middle
Ada	Mainlander	College	Businessman	Mainlander	College	Public service	upper-middle

### Reference cases

Ruby	Minnan	Senior Vocational	Small business owner	Minnan	Senior Vocational	Secretary	upper-middle
Danny	Minnan	College	Company manager	Minnan	College	Housewife	upper-middle

**Table 2- Final Participants<sup>23</sup>**

<sup>23</sup> The family annual income (FAI) is classified into 5 categories. The FAI below 360,000 NTD (£7,200) is categorised as 'low'; the FAI between 360,001-720,000 NTD (£7,201-14,000) is categorised as 'lower-middle'; ; the FAI between 720,001-1,080,000 NTD (£14,001-21,000) is categorised as 'middle'; the FAI between 1,080,001-1,440,000 NTD (£21,001-28,000) is categorised as 'upper-middle' ; the FAI above 1,440,001 NTD (£28,001) is categorised as 'high'. There is gap between low and middle family income because the two cases from lower-middle' were not willing to be interviewed.



### 3.3.2 Interviewing Parents

Yin (2009) suggests that one type of case study interview is an *in-depth interview*. Interviews are an important source of case study evidence because most case studies are about human affairs or behaviours. Well-informed interviewees can provide important insights into such affairs or events. The interviewees also can provide shortcuts to the prior history of such situations, helping to identify other relevant sources of evidence. In order to get interviewees to talk more about their opinions about language education, the information already gathered by the questionnaire was used as a basis for the interview. Yin further claims that the more that an interviewee is willing to participate, the more that “the role may be considered one of an “informant” rather than a respondent” (p.107). Informants are interviewees who are more engaged and have deeper sense of shared participation, and respondents are simply responding to stimuli from the interview. Hence, gathering data from informants is often more critical to the success of a case study than from respondents. Informants can provide the case study researcher with close look into a matter and also can initiate access to “corroboratory or contrary sources of evidence” (*ibid.*). Ten of my participants were willing to participate in the interview when I first collected questionnaire and two were persuaded after I had approached them again, therefore I regarded them as potential informants. However, these latter two parents were telephone interviewed because they felt uncomfortable with a face-to-face interview, while the rest were interviewed face-to-face. Though I followed an interview schedule, I did not resist interviewees’ preference for a free-flowing conversation. In addition to topics relating to language maintenance, English learning and parental involvement, some interviewees discussed their wider beliefs about education too. When interviewing parents from language schools, the place was chosen by the parents: two

were carried out in their homes, three in coffee shops, one in the place where both parents worked, and four in a classroom of the language school. The two additional interviews were carried out in their homes. The children were not present when the interviews were carried out in the empty classroom; while conducting the interviews in coffee shops, workplace, and homes the children were present but we tried not to let the children overhear the interviews and we interrupted the interview if children approached us. Interview duration ranged from 60 to 120 minutes.

I am a Mandarin-Minnan bilingual speaker. While interviewing Minnan parents, they were encouraged to answer in Minnan if they preferred because some opinions might be best expressed in their first language. Therefore, most of the interviews (with Minnan parents) were conducted both in Mandarin and Minnan. While interviewing Mainlanders and Hakka informants, the interviews were all conducted in Mandarin only.

Another issue about interviews is whether to record them. Yin (2009) claims that using recording devices is a matter of personal preference. Recordings definitely provide a more accurate transcription than taking notes. However, he suggests that there are four circumstances in which a recording device should not be used: first, when an interviewee refuses permission or appears uncomfortable in its presence; second, there is no specific plan for doing verbatim transcription; third, the researcher is not good at managing mechanical devices and it may create distractions during the interview; or last, the investigator thinks that the recording device is a substitute for “listening” closely throughout the course of an interview. Eight parents agreed to be recorded and six refused, including the two telephone interviewees, two face-to-face interviewees from the language schools and the mothers of the two additional cases.

Although six interviews were not recorded, I took notes and tried to write down as many words the interviewees responded as possible.

### **3.3.3 Difficulties of Data Collection**

Bryman (2008) indicates there are several disadvantages to using questionnaire as a method to collect data, such as the researcher cannot prompt or probe, or collect additional data; there is a greater risk of missing data, the researcher does not know who the respondent is and the response rates are usually low. Since questionnaire was not the only strategy applied to collect data, the aforementioned difficulties were resolved.

Kvale (1996) suggested ten qualification criteria of an interviewer and Bryman (2008) added two to Kvale's list. I noted that these criteria were important, yet carrying out a successful interview requires more than these rules. I could not consciously follow them without caution because interviewing people is a cultural activity, governed by cultural rules and expectations, and I was aware of that. For example, Taiwanese parents respect teachers and listen to what teachers say. Sometimes they forgot I was a researcher who aimed to explore their opinions instead of an English teacher who might give them some advice on English learning. Therefore, I had to keep asking questions from time to time in order to elaborate in-depth answers. Besides, I think some parents may not have been as trustful of confidentiality as I promised. That is, even though I promised several times that all the answers on the questionnaire or statements in interviews would be kept anonymous, and I kept circling around a controversial issue, such as politics, to elicit rich responses, yet they still did not comment.

### 3.3.4 Credibility of the Research

In the design and implementation of empirical research, traditional attention is paid to validity and reliability to ensure the quality of the design (Cohen *et al*, 2007). Cohen explains that validity of a study refers to whether it ‘measures’ what it is supposed to measure accurately or not and reliability means if the study is consistent over time, over instruments and over groups of respondents. However, Olesen (2000) argues that validity and reliability, which are suitable in quantitative research, cannot tackle the complexity of qualitative research. Denscombe (2002) points out that most social researchers aim not to produce a replicable piece of research. He raises questions about whether even if it were possible to carry out a study again in effectively the same situation, would it be desirable to do so? The aim of this study is not to identify a pattern of parental language ideology formation but to explore and illustrate the complexity and diversity of this process; as a consequence, standard interpretations and measures of ‘validity’ and ‘reliability’ are inappropriate for evaluating this study. For example, the same interviewees may give different opinions over time (or even within one interview). Inconsistency in their responses does not necessarily mean the data analysis is not reliable but simply reflects their human variability and the complexity of the situation. Hence, instead of applying conventional criteria of validity and reliability, I would like to examine the *credibility* of the research in terms of data collection and data analysis.

In order to maximise the credibility, Denscombe (*ibid*) suggests a researcher should incorporate: “1) an explicit description of the methods of data collection and analysis; 2) a justification for the choice of approach” (p.119). Echoing Denscombe, I aim to address the following questions:

- Do I collect right data for research questions?
- Can I trust the data I collect?
- Is the analysis valid?
- Would someone else arrive same results as my analysis?

The following strategies were applied to gather the right data for my research questions. *First*, I decided to use a qualitative approach to gather in-depth descriptions of parents' ideologies of language and language use and their behaviours in response to these ideologies. *Then*, questionnaire and interview items were developed from analysis of the central research questions, supported by discussions with my colleagues and supervisor. At the piloting stage, the questionnaire and the interview were tested to see if they offered the potential to answer the research questions fully and accurately. Meanwhile, the interviews were recorded (with interviewees' consent) and notes were taken when interviewing and transcription were done immediately to ensure the true presentation of data. *In addition*, two different data collection instruments were used: a questionnaire to establish basic context parameters, which then framed the particular format of each interview, the primary purpose of which was to gather rich data for thick descriptions.

As an outsider of the language school, I do not have political interests in or conflicts with the language school and the interviewees. I explained the purpose of my study to the interviewees clearly before the research was carried out. I did not aim to compare the performance of their children and would not reveal their opinions to the language school nor the public. Although I tried to get familiar with the interviewees by calling their children and helping them review homework, I did not mark each pupil's performance. They saw me as a free tutor, rather than as a 'spy' from the

language school. In addition, I told the parents I am particularly interested in how they 'see' different languages and how much they get involved in their children's language learning, instead of the effectiveness of their children's English learning. Therefore, I was confident that the interviewees trusted me and give me truthful information.

Qualitative research is bounded in the context within which the research is carried out. Any results or conclusions are 'true' only in that particular setting (Gray, 2004). As a Taiwanese, I think I understand the context well and can provide an insider perspective while analysing. Also, I adopted Curdt-Christiansen's (2009) model as an initial analytical tool and to provide an 'outsider-derived' framework to prevent possible insider bias in the analysis on my part. I selected, synthesised and described the data in as detached and objective a way as I could. Then, I brought together the thematic concepts and categories into a remodelled theoretical framework. Consequently, I think the analysis is valid.

While analysing the data, I discussed my analysis with my supervisor as a means of checking for insider bias on my part and forcing reflection on and justification of my ideas. Denscombe (2002) suggests that social research is not asking questions about 'right' or 'wrong' in terms of choice of strategy, methods and analysis. He claims the credibility of social research relies on whether the choice is 'reasonable' rather than 'right'. Since there is no 'right' way to analyse the data and my supervisor and I have similar interpretation towards data analysis, I believe the reliability of data analysis is high.

### 3.3.5 Ethical Issues

The British Educational Research Association (BERA) ethical guidelines (2004) were used as principles and I was ethnically sensitive at all times while planning and carrying out the research. *First*, informed consent was considered. In order to persuade parents to participate this study and lower their insecurity, I explained the purpose of my study to the parents again in person even though it was stated in the cover letter of the questionnaire. I promised to give a full transcription to each interviewee after interviewing. All interviewees participated with their consent and willingness.

*Then*, I am responsible for showing respect to the interviewees in the following issues (BERA, 2004). *1)* All interviewees were told they were entitled to withdraw from the study at any time. *2)* Although I did not interview children directly, I was fully aware of the potential emotional harm if the information obtained was revealed. Therefore, I gave all children English names and no Chinese names or surnames were written down or were traceable. For example, the parent interviewed was recorded as X's mother (where X represents the student's English name). Using English names was a strategy to lower traceability. There were no identifying marks or other personal details to cause any harm to the children. *3)* I was aware that the use of incentives is problematic in research; hence, no incentive was used to encourage participation. *4)* The research was designed to explore the parents' ideologies and there were no 'right' or 'wrong' judgements or interpretations of them; therefore, there was no expected detriment arising from participation in this study. *5)* All participants' confidentiality and anonymity were my major concerns. I respected their privacy at all times. The parents were informed they had the right not to answer any sensitive or personal

questions on the questionnaire or during interviewing if they felt uncomfortable. Data and personal information were guaranteed to be kept confidential. 6) I informed the participants that the findings were only to be used for the researcher's research enquiry. Personal information or opinions about any issues would not be revealed publicly. The interviewees all agreed to make disclosure for academic purposes. Once again, all interviewees understood these matters and participated with their consent.

Furthermore, all participants understood the recording and six interviewees refused to be recorded. Interview recordings, notes and transcriptions were kept by me. The findings would be highly confidential and non-traceability was the priority. The consent whether to participate and to be recorded or not was laid in the interviewees' hands entirely.



## **Chapter 4 – The Cases**

In this chapter, I present the fourteen cases, twelve of them are from the same private English language school in Taichung, one is from Taipei and the other is from Chiayi<sup>24</sup>. The participants in this research included ten mothers and four fathers. All of the interviewees speak Mandarin as either first or second language, except one mother from Vietnam. Among the five exogamous-couple families, all of the interviewees can at least understand their partner's mother-tongue. The organisation of presenting each story is **1).** background information of each family → **2).** parents' ideology of mother-tongue → **3).** parents' ideology of English → **4).** their attitudes towards language policies in Taiwan → **5).** their 'theories' of language acquisition and their language management at home.

Both parents' language background of each family is presented in Table 3, in which different colours demonstrate different ethnicities. Each interviewee's language competence in different languages and home language(s) spoken are presented in Table 4. The colour highlights the five exogamous-couple families in the research.

Parents send their children to learn English with different agendas and they all hold different views on mother-tongue teaching; it is my aim to explore what the underlying factors influencing their language ideologies are. Parents may motivate or propel their children to learn English directly or indirectly. Some parents enhance their children's learning motivation by material rewards; others actively engage in their children's English learning, collaborate with other agents such as English

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<sup>24</sup> See Section 3.2.2 for the discussion of the strategy of sampling.

teachers to maximise learning outcomes, or seek assistance from social networks. In addition, it is interesting to find that some parents directly train their children to be good language learners, which might normally be regarded as language teachers' responsibilities. In some cases, parents foster certain learning behaviours and beliefs; in other cases, parents force the participants to take up particular learning behaviours. Similarly, different parents have different attitudes towards the teaching of mother-tongue. Some believe mother-tongue maintenance is worth promoting, yet others think it is not practical in a globalised world. Some families maintain mother-tongue successfully and transmit it to their children, some families unconsciously switch to Mandarin, while others deliberately shift languages.

	Father						Mother					
Child	L1	Education	Abilities in Mandarin	Abilities in Minnan	Abilities in Hakfa	Abilities in English	L1	Education	Abilities in Mandarin	Abilities in Minnan	Abilities in Hakfa	Abilities in English
Tracy	Minnan	University	Proficient	Proficient	None	Functional	Mandarin*	Master	Proficient	Functional	None	Functional
Max	Minnan	Senior Vocational	Proficient	Proficient	None	None	Vietnamese*	Junior High	Functional	Minimal	None	None
Monica	Mandarin*	Master	Proficient	Functional	Minimal	Functional	Hakfa	College	Proficient	Functional	Proficient	Functional
Candy	Hakfa	College	Proficient	Functional	Proficient	Functional	Minnan*	University	Proficient	Proficient	Minimal	Functional
Jean	Hakfa	Senior High	Proficient	Functional	Proficient	Minimal	Minnan*	University	Proficient	Proficient	Minimal	Minimal
Vera	Minnan*	Senior High	Proficient	Proficient	None	Functional	Minnan	Senior Vocational	Proficient	Proficient	None	Functional
Ray	Minnan	Senior Vocational	Proficient	Proficient	None	Minimal	Minnan*	Senior Vocational	Proficient	Proficient	None	Functional
Eva	Minnan	College	Proficient	Proficient	None	Functional	Minnan*	College	Proficient	Proficient	None	Functional
Kevin	Minnan	College	Proficient	Proficient	None	Minimal	Minnan*	College	Proficient	Proficient	None	Minimal
Leo	Minnan	Senior Vocational	Proficient	Proficient	None	None	Minnan*	Senior Vocational	Proficient	Proficient	None	None
Barry	Minnan*	Master	Proficient	Proficient	None	Functional	Minnan	College	Proficient	Proficient	None	Functional
Ada	Mandarin*	College	Proficient	Minimal	None	Functional	Mandarin	College	Proficient	None	None	Minimal
Ruby	Minnan	Senior Vocational	Proficient	Proficient	None	None	Minnan*	Senior Vocational	Proficient	Proficient	None	Functional
Danny	Minnan	College	Proficient	Proficient	None	Functional	Minnan*	College	Proficient	Proficient	None	Functional

**Table 3- Parental Language Background**

\*Indicates which parents was interviewed

	Age	Interviewee	Education	L1	Abilities in Mandarin	Abilities in Minnan	Abilities in Hakfa	Abilities in English	Home language used	English at home
Tracy	13	Mother	Master	Mandarin	Proficient	Functional	None	Functional	Mandarin, Minnan	Occasionally
Max	10	Mother	Junior High	Vietnamese	Functional	Minimal	None	None	Mandarin, Minnan	None
Monica	9	Father	Master	Mandarin	Proficient	Functional	Minimal	Functional	Mandarin	Occasionally
Candy	12	Mother	University	Minnan	Proficient	Proficient	Minimal	Functional	Mandarin, Minnan	Often
Jean	11	Mother	University	Minnan	Proficient	Proficient	Minimal	Minimal	Mandarin	Occasionally
Vera	10	Father	Senior High	Minnan	Proficient	Proficient	None	Functional	Mandarin, Minnan	Often
Ray	14	Mother	Senior Vocational	Minnan	Proficient	Proficient	None	Functional	Mandarin, Minnan	Occasionally
Eva	13	Mother	College	Minnan	Proficient	Proficient	None	Functional	Mandarin	Often
Kevin	13	Mother	College	Minnan	Proficient	Proficient	None	Minimal	Mandarin, Minnan	Occasionally
Leo	15	Mother	Senior Vocational	Minnan	Proficient	Proficient	None	None	Mandarin, Minnan	None
Barry	11	Father	Master	Minnan	Proficient	Proficient	None	Functional	Mandarin, Minnan	Occasionally
Ada	13	Father	College	Mandarin	Proficient	Minimal	None	Functional	Mandarin	Occasionally
Ruby	13	Mother	Senior Vocational	Minnan	Proficient	Proficient	None	Functional	Mandarin, Minnan	Occasionally
Danny	11	Mother	College	Minnan	Proficient	Proficient	None	Functional	Mandarin	Often

**Table 4- Interviewees' Language Background**

## **4.1 Case A: Ada**

Ada grows up in a Mainlander, monolingual Mandarin-speaking family. However, monolinguals are required to learn a minority language at school, so she learns Minnan. The reason for choosing it, as noted by her father, was entirely practical, because it is the most widely-spoken minority language in Taiwan. The family moved from Tainan (a city in Southern Taiwan) to Taichung and transferred her to this English language school about two years ago. Her father thinks there is no need to learn Minnan because the majority of residents speak Mandarin in Taichung, whereas in Tainan the commonest community language is Minnan.

*我覺得無學習鄉土語言的必要，只有以前在台南才用的到，目前在台中生活根本不需要會說台語。*

*I think there is no need to learn minority languages. We used Minnan when we lived in Tainan, but we don't need it in Taichung.*

Ada's father believes that if children learn minority languages, their future, particularly with regards to employment, is limited to Taiwan. He dismisses the Taiwanese community as small and unimportant. However, his attitude could also be seen as a 'defensive' response as his competence in Minnan is minimal and Ada's mother does not speak Minnan at all.

*如果只是學好台語，只能局限在台灣罷了。台灣的就業市場又這麼小，不往外發展以後肯定很辛苦。*

*If children only learn Minnan, they are restricted in Taiwan. The labour market in Taiwan is so small; it would be difficult in the future if they don't step out of Taiwan.*

In fact, he has quite negative attitudes towards mother-tongue teaching and the limited perspective that he feels it implies. He sees it as representing a very local and restricted view- ‘a small island mentality’.

母語教育缺乏國際觀，全世界的人都在強調英語教育，而台灣卻強調鄉土教育，表示政府存有島國心態，不知觀察世界脈動。

*It lacks worldwide views. The world emphasises English learning greatly and we emphasise mother-tongue teaching. It is small island mentality and the government is not aware of the global trend.*

In contrast, he has strong positive attitudes towards learning English. He believes it to be an international language for study and employment, which is ‘outward-looking’, and has a global communicative orientation. Taiwan is seen in terms of its political and economic significance ‘in relation to the outside world’.

He strongly disagrees with the ban on English teaching in kindergartens and claims that whether or not a child learns English should be the parents’ personal, market-led decision.

更何況禁止了，大家就沒有去學了嘛？也未必阿！

*Does it stop people send their children to learn English after the ban? Not at all!*

Although he gives some examples of the importance of good English language ability, the advantages of learning English largely remain expressed in terms of vague ‘opportunities’.

很多跨國組織或是國際知名公司都是用英文為溝通語。而且出國就業或深造，就一定會需要英文。如果學好英文就是給自己多開一扇窗多一個往外發展的機會。

*Many international organisations or famous companies use English as lingua franca. Besides, you need English if you study or work abroad. Learning English well opens up one more window and gives opportunities to expand oneself.*

His emphasis on English learning is driven by experience from his occupation, which he uses to encourage Ada. To him, a language serves for economic/ labour market purposes rather than for inter-personal or inter-cultural communication.

像我因為工作需要常常飛來飛去，我就會提醒她英文的重要性，如果我英文不好就可能不能出國或是得不到這些工作。

*I need to fly frequently because of the job so I remind her of the importance of English. If I didn't speak English, I couldn't get these jobs or fly.*

Due to his own experience, he also sets high expectations for Ada's English learning and future work.

(Ada 的英語學習)尚有空間，覺得可以再學好一點，對她升學才有幫助。

*There is room to improve her English. I think she should learn better to benefit her in further study.*

我也希望 Ada 以後能在跨國大公司上班，而英文就是必要能力。

*I hope she can work in international companies where English is seen as a must.*

He requires Ada to study English every day, but he also motivates and maintains her interest in English learning by taking her to movies or travelling abroad. Although he recognises language as an important issue, once again this is expressed in terms of employment opportunities.

當然也會犒賞她。在暑假我都會盡量安排出國，讓她多看看這世界，也讓她體會到語言的重要性。就像上次去日本，我也是有提醒她導遊的日文很好，所以讓她可以跟日本人溝通，甚至得到這份工作，所以我也希望她把英文學好，以後找個好工作，或是出國念書或是工作。

*Of course I encourage her, like travelling abroad. I want her to see the world more and understand the importance of language. When we travelled to Japan last time, I reminded her that because the tour guide spoke good Japanese, resulted in getting this job and being able to talk to Japanese people. So I hope she could learn English well to get a good job or study or work abroad.*

He pointed out the Japanese-speaking tour guide to Ada from a job-oriented angle, instead of inter-personal-communication-oriented prospect. A language is closely linked to economic opportunity to him.

## **4.2 Case B: Tracy**

Tracy comes from a family where both Mandarin and Minnan are spoken. Her father is a Minnan speaker and her mother is a Mainlander. Tracy was raised by her grandparents, who are monolingual Minnan speakers, before she was five. After Tracy was born, the family also hired a Filipina maid to take care of their children (Tracy and her two elder siblings). It is common in Taiwan that parents (especially those who have young children) prefer to hire Filipino maids (than other nationalities) not only to help with child-raising but also to teach the children English, because English is the Philippines' official language.

Although Tracy's mother is a Mainlander, she has very positive attitudes towards mother-tongue teaching, in contrast to Ada's father in the previous case. She claims mother-tongue teaching and English learning are both important. In addition, she thinks being able to speak minority languages not only helps children to communicate with those of older generations but also with other people in Taiwan. She acknowledges the importance of other minority languages in Taiwan as enabling participation in Taiwan community. Her view is more local-community-communicative-orientated than Ada's father. For her, all languages, including English and other indigenous languages, are equally important because she sees them as inter-personal, inter-cultural communication tools.

語言就是一個溝通工具罷了，多一樣語言就多跟不同種族的人溝通，也可以多了解一個文化…因為在台灣還是要學其它語言才能跟不同地區的人溝通，所以我一直強調多學一個語言就是對 Tracy 加分。

*A language is a communicative tool. Learning one more language enables you to communicate with one more ethnic people and understand one more culture....You need to learn other languages to communicate with other people in different areas in Taiwan. That's why I say learning one more language is a bonus to Tracy.*



She believes that a native-speaking environment can facilitate language learning. Therefore, she thinks that we should encourage mother-tongue teaching more than English learning in Taiwan because Taiwanese children are living in a natural indigenous-language-speaking environment. It is more practical to learn different community languages than English in Taiwan. This opinion may be a result of her personal experience, but it is important to note that she is not confident in her English ability, which might also encourage a ‘defensive response’ that English is not as important as other indigenous languages if living in Taiwan.

像我學英文學了快二十幾年了，還是會不敢開口。

*I have been learning English for more than twenty years, but still dare not speak.*

She also criticises the teaching policy and she has her own beliefs on how to teach Minnan. Being a second-language-speaker of Minnan, she thinks learning Minnan is so difficult that the materials should be made more interesting and effective.

政府在實施鄉土語言教育時應該要規畫好。例如課本的拼音有點難，小孩看著課本根本不會念。

*The government should plan carefully when they implemented the teaching. For example, the pinyin system in the textbook is difficult. Children can't even pronounce by reading the textbook.*

Her attitude towards learning English is quite neutral. She thinks English is important in a contemporary globalised world without doubt, but we should not dismiss the importance of other indigenous languages for communicative and cultural reasons.

只是說現在因為出國變成一種趨勢，所以學好英文才變得比較重要，但學好英文並不是最重要的阿。

*English becomes more important only because going abroad becomes a trend. But learning English well is not the most important thing.*

In addition, she is the most critical of all interviewees of what she sees as an exaggerated trend of learning English in Taiwan. What she opposes is the over-emphasised value of English as “credential capital” (He, 2009, p. 27).

我覺得如果過度強調英文的重要性，不僅怕物極必反，也是本末倒置阿。在台灣，又沒有英文的環境，逼她講也只是半調子，反而學其它方言，像是客家話或是原住民話更有實用性也更有環境。

*I think over-emphasising the importance of English not only causes opposite results but also it is an action of ‘put the cart before the horse’. In Taiwan, there is no environment for English learning. Forcing Tracy to speak English is not practical. Instead, learning other minority languages is more practical and there is a native-speaking environment.*

Her own English learning experience may also be influencing her beliefs about English teaching.

太小(幼稚園)就學(英文)文法或背單字我覺得容易揠苗助長..國中就比較可以接受..但英文應該還是要注意溝通能力，不然孩子遇到外國人還是會不敢開口說英文。許多台灣人都這樣，所以應該要多訓練口語能力。

*I think it may cause a bad result if children learn English grammar or memorise vocabulary in kindergarten... it’s acceptable (to learn those) in secondary school...but English learning should focus on communication skills, otherwise children are afraid to speak up when they see foreigners. Many Taiwanese are like this, so speaking ability should be exercised more.*

The reason why she sent Tracy to the language school was driven by a combination of the social-cultural linguistic situation in Taiwan, together with a sense of intense educational competition. Although Tracy did not attend English-immersion kindergarten, she learned English two hours each week; her primary school started teaching English in third grade and there is a gap between the two stages, which is the reason why Tracy attended this English language school. She claims that all parents are afraid their children might not catch up with other classmates, presumably reflecting her own fears for her daughter. In addition, she notices that because every pupil begins to learn English at a different age, everyone’s English proficiency is

different and it makes it more difficult for teachers to teach. She thinks the government should address this problem.

Perhaps because of her own experience as a teacher, she emphasises the importance of literacy in the environment. She creates an English learning environment at home for Tracy, such as English books or videos. She bought many English storybooks for Tracy and sometimes she read to her when she was young. She also watches movies or cartoons with Tracy if she has time.

像她很喜歡 *Nemo*，所以我要求我幫她買 DVD。她小時候幾乎每個禮拜都要看一遍，我覺得她台詞背得很熟，即使不知道意思，每次都會跟著電影一起念出來，我覺得很好玩。

*She likes Nemo and asked me to buy her a DVD. She watched it almost once a week when she was little. I think she even memorised the scripts because she could read along with the movie. I think it's interesting.*

She does not set English language competence criteria for Tracy; instead, she encourages and motivates Tracy greatly and tries her best to maintain Tracy's interest in English learning. For example, she always asks Tracy to communicate with the Filipina maid for her. She thinks it is a good opportunity for Tracy to practice English as well as to boost her confidence.

我能做的就是盡量用正面的方式鼓勵她們學英文。但是要學好英文就要等她自己開竅才會學得好學得快，硬逼她學是在做交代的，她學起來沒興趣不開心，我逼的人也會滿肚子火！

*What I can do is to encourage her to learn English positively. But it needs her to realise the importance of English in order to make big progress. If I push her, she is learning for me; she will be unmotivated and unhappy and I will be angry too.*

She also encourages her three children to attend English courses abroad in summer vacations. Her eldest daughter attended once three years ago and she found it effective. She did encourage Tracy to go with her sister but Tracy was too dependent and rejected the idea. The family takes trips abroad every year. She thinks it is a good

way for children to experience different cultures and they do not only travel to English-speaking countries. Being able to speak a language means to her being able to communicate with more people and she wants her children to understand this by travelling to different countries. Both Ada's father and Tracy's mother travel quite often, but they view 'language' differently. Ada's father's view of a language is more instrumental and economy-driven, while Tracy's mother's is more human- and culture-oriented.

### 4.3 Case C: Monica

Monica's father is a Mainlander and her mother is a Hakfa speaker. Monica is required to learn one of her parents' mother-tongues at school; therefore, she learns Hakfa. However, her parents would prefer her to learn Minnan because it will be more beneficial to her in the future. Both of Monica's parents can speak Minnan and they use Minnan at work sometimes; so their preference might result from their own experience. However, her father speaks minimal Hakfa, so his preference towards Minnan can also be seen as a 'defensive' response. As he commented:

好像沒甚麼必要，因為現在很少人說客家話了。而且我跟媽媽都會說台語，反而比較想讓 Monica 學台語，因為至少未來對就業市場比較有幫助。

*It's not necessary to learn Hakfa because only a few people speak it. Her mother and I both speak Minnan and we prefer her to learn Minnan because at least it's practical in the labour market.*

Like Ada's father, Monica's father's ideology of language learning is also economy-driven. Both are Mandarin speakers, but unlike Ada's father who denigrates Minnan, Monica's father values it. In fact, Monica's father has positive attitudes towards both Minnan and English. His favouring of English is influenced by the 'American dream' he has held since he was young.

(學英文)可以出國唸書，或是嫁給外國人，美國環境好風景又漂亮，我們小時候因為美軍駐台，大家都有美國夢，幻想跟台灣的美國大兵一樣賺美金、花台幣、開大車、住洋房。

*Learning English one can study abroad or marry foreigners. The environment in America is good and beautiful. When we were children, American troops were stationed in Taiwan, we all had American dreams. We dreamed to earn US dollars but spend NT dollars, drive big cars and live in villas.*

Monica was transferred to this school because her father found her speaking ability was not developed in her previous day-care school. He thinks Monica is shy and she needs encouragement from teachers to help her speak up, for which he thinks

foreign teachers are better than Taiwanese teachers. He mentions a widely-held stereotype in parents' mind that foreigners are more outgoing and active in teaching, while Taiwanese teachers tend to use traditional ways to teach, such as recitation and memorisation. If parents want their children to develop their speaking ability or learn happily, they tend to look for foreign teachers.

以前在安親班補了三年英文，覺得太重視文法及單字，所以孩子很容易因為考不好就失去信心，漸漸地有點排斥英文。加上老師不重視口說能力，她也不敢開口跟我用英文對話，最多只會念念課本的句子。

*The previous day-care school focused too much on grammar and vocabulary. She lost confidence easily when she didn't have good scores and rejected English gradually. The teacher didn't emphasise spoken ability either. She dared not to speak English to me. She only read English sentences from textbooks at most.*

His opinion about English teaching echoes with that of Jean's mother's. They both believe that the way English is taught at school, as a subject, is boring and demotivates pupils' interest.

教法和教材再生動一點，延長學習時間以培養興趣，不要讓學生覺得(英文)只是一門考試的學科。

*Teaching methods and textbooks should be livelier and extend the time of English teaching to motivate children. Don't make pupils feel English is another exam subject.*

He suggests that it is better for children to learn English as early as possible. The ban in kindergartens is meaningless to him. He believes that teaching English at third grade pushes parents to send children to cram schools.

像 Monica 的小學是一年級就開始教英文，台中市有很多小學都偷跑，所以何必把時間拉那麼晚？乾脆都統一提早到一年級就好了。

*Monica's primary school teaches English from first grade. Many primary schools in Taichung teach English stealthily. Why does the government ban English teaching at an early age? We should teach English at first grade equally all over the country.*

The way Monica's father motivates her to learn English is to 'concretise' his own 'American dream' to her.

我會向她說明有英文能力之後的美麗人生，讓她嚮往那樣的生活進而去把英文唸好。

*I illustrate the beautiful life she may have if she speaks English and hopes she internalises it as an intrinsic motive to learn English well.*

He facilitates Monica's English learning in different ways, such as buying English storybooks and DVDs. He thinks girls like to read fairy tales. He also involves himself in teaching Monica. He practices speaking with Monica and asks her to study English for 30-60 minutes every day. He also speaks English to Monica while they are watching movies.

想透過不同方式鼓勵她學英文...在陪她看電影的過程當中會跟她說英文，希望訓練她口說能力。

*I want to encourage her to learn English in different ways... I spoke English to her while we watched movies together to train her speaking ability.*

#### 4.4 Case D: Candy

Candy comes from a family where Father is a Hakfa speaker and Mother is a Minnan speaker. However, Hakfa is not spoken at home and her mother does not have any expectation that Candy will master Minnan to any high level, although Candy learns Minnan as a second language at school. Candy's family lives nearer to her mother's family, so Candy hears Minnan from time to time. Candy's mother speaks Minnan to Candy occasionally; however, Candy's mother thinks it is acceptable that Candy's listening and comprehension skills are stronger than her speaking skill. Her mother speaks minimal Hakfa and her father is very busy, so no one speaks Hakfa to Candy at home.

(學台語比客家話)因為對於生活比較有幫助，現在已經很少人說客家話了。

*Learning Minnan (instead of Hakfa) is more useful in daily life. Fewer people speak Hakfa now.*

Interestingly, Candy's mother is an extreme case who places considerable emphasis on learning English. She devotes herself greatly to educating Candy bilingually (Mandarin and English) and deliberately creates an English-rich environment for Candy.

要是跟英文有相關的事情或活動，我都會帶她參加。或是別人介紹有效的教學法、教材、老師、補習班、幼稚園等等，我都會去試。光是她小學英文補習班就換過三家了。

*I took her to participate in all English events or activities and I tried all the teaching methods, materials, tutors, cram schools or kindergartens which others recommended. I even changed three English cram schools while she was in primary school.*



Her knowledge of learning in a native-speaking environment results from her own English learning experience and other relatives living abroad. She found that Candy's cousins' English ability improved dramatically after they went to live in Canada, so she sent Candy to an English-immersion kindergarten so that Candy was forced to use English every day. Candy has been attending English cram schools since she was in first grade. Her mother also hired an additional private English tutor to speak English to Candy, and so that Candy would study English every day. Now Candy is studying in a private ESL secondary school because she wants Candy to learn English very well. She thinks immersion in an English-rich environment is effective and efficient.

三管(ESL、家教、捷敏)齊下好像進步挺快的。

*Three methods (ESL class, private tutor, and the language school) together seem to help her to a great extent.*

Candy's mother follows almost every method that experts or other people have suggested to her.

她又是老大，所以對於教養小孩比較不熟，只好一直實驗，別人說的都去做看看，我也會看專家的書。俗話說：老大照書養，老二照豬養就是這樣。

*She is the first child, so I don't know much about raising children; therefore I have to experiment. I would try what people recommended and read books. As a saying goes, "Raise the first child according to books, and raise the second child as one would raise pigs".*

She is not satisfied with what Candy has achieved in English learning; she wants Candy to be a native-like English speaker. She gives two reasons for placing great value on learning English. The first is her awareness of the severe competition for educational advantages; the second arises from her family's own contact with the outside, globalised world. She wants Candy to study (or maybe work) abroad someday, giving Candy's cousins as an inspirational example.

現在小孩生得少，我不希望她輸在起跑點上。英文是國際語言阿。像她的表哥表姊在加拿大念書都是要說英文。我哥哥要出國研究也是很要求英文能力，不然也沒辦法發表文章或在國外念書、做研究。而我希望她在台灣念到大學畢業之後能出國繼續念研究所。加上現在網路這麼發達，要了解國外的資訊或是國外網站購物，都要會英文。

*Fewer children are born nowadays and I don't want her lose in the starting point. English is an international language. Her cousins who study in Canada use English every day. My brother needs good English ability to do research, publish journals and teach in Canada. I want Candy to pursue higher education abroad after she finishes university. Furthermore, you need English to access foreign information or shop for foreign goods online.*

Another reason which may explain her emphasis on English more than Minnan is that she herself cannot speak English fluently and she is still learning English now. Speaking English like a native is her dream which she seemingly wants to impose on Candy or wants Candy to fulfil for her. In addition, her previous working experience and her connection with family who live abroad reinforce her language ideology- English is for the outside world and Minnan for inland communication.

我從小就很羨慕會說英文的人，如果可以很流利的說英文，出國都不會有問題。

*I adore people who speak English well since I was young. If you can speak English fluently, you don't have any problem while going abroad.*

In order to make sure that Candy's future is prosperous, she raises her carefully and involves herself greatly in her development. She has cared about Candy's English learning since she was born.

從幼稚園時開始每天會陪她聽 CD 或是看童話故事書至少 30 分鐘。

*Since she was in kindergarten, I spent at least 30 minutes with her everyday to listen to CDs or read storybooks.*

She also seeks help from family members to nurture Candy's language development, focusing not on Minnan but English only. The family takes trips abroad, mostly to English-speaking countries or to visit relatives in Canada. She thinks travelling abroad can help Candy practice English.

我哥哥(她舅舅)目前在加拿大，所以有空我都會讓她用 Skype 跟表哥表姊視訊講英文。

*My brother (Candy's uncle) is living in Canada, so I ask her to use Skype to speak to her cousins in English.*

Her own English learning experience and knowledge play an important role in her involvement in Candy's English learning.

我覺得年紀越大，記憶力就越差，學起英文也就變得更吃力了。像我去年唸大學時有商業英文課，我就覺得學得很不好。我以前年輕時，大專剛畢業進外商公司，下班後也有去學商英，當時就學得比現在好很多。所以我覺得學英文要越早越好。

*I think memory decreases with age and it makes learning English more difficult. Like I had business English classes when I was in university last year and I didn't learn well. When I was young, working in a foreign company after graduating from college, I learned business English after work too. I learned better at that time, so I think learning English is 'the earlier the better'.*

She criticises the ban on English teaching in kindergarten. Because she emphasises English learning heavily, it is not surprising to see she thinks the ban is indefensible.

怎麼會定這樣的法規，學英文應該要越早開始越好阿，這樣台灣的小孩才會從小有雙語能力，才能有競爭力。

*Why did the government make such a policy? Children should learn English as early as possible and be bilingual to make them competitive.*

She also gives suggestions for English learning in primary schools. She thinks there should be English proficiency streaming for pupils in primary schools. She gives Candy's class as an example, possibly indicating that her support for streaming is based on a fear of her own daughter's education suffering, rather than on general principles.

因為現在大部分的小孩都有補英文，但是補習時間早晚不一，造成程度落差很大，Candy 班還有人 ABC 單字都沒學過，而她念的是全美幼稚園。這樣老師也很難教，她上課也覺得很無聊，根本不重視這門課。

*Most pupils attend English cram schools but in different ages, so they all have different proficiency. Take Candy for example, she went to a whole-day English kindergarten but some of her classmates didn't even learn English alphabets at all. It's difficult for teachers to teach English and Candy felt bored in English class and didn't take it seriously.*

## 4.5 Case E: Jean

Jean's father is a Hakfa speaker and her mother is a Minnan speaker. The dominant language at home is Mandarin because it is the medium of instruction at school. Mandarin was spoken deliberately when Jean was young because her parents did not want language to interfere with her educational performance.

跟小孩幾乎都是說國語，因為學校是說國語。不想讓她一次學太多語言造成困惑，導致影響課業。而且客家話現在大家幾乎不講，台語以後如果有用到再學也不遲。

*We speak Mandarin to children most of the time because it is the medium of instruction. I don't want to confuse her and influence her school work by learning too many languages at the same time. No one speaks Hakfa now and she can always pick up Minnan in the future.*

Her mother is quite optimistic that Jean can always learn Minnan well in the future if she wants to. She claims that since there is a native-speaking environment for children to learn their mother-tongue, we should not worry too much about maintaining minority languages. In addition, she thinks Jean does not need to speak 'Father's tongue' because seldom people speak Hakfa anyway. Therefore, Mandarin is the dominant language at home.

她聽得懂台語，但不太會說，不過以後長大要學應該也很快，因為我和外公外婆都會說台語，有很多人可以教她，而且台灣有這個環境，要學好不難。

*She understands Minnan but can't speak fluently. I think she can learn Minnan pretty fast because my parents speak Minnan and many people can teach her. There is an environment to learn Minnan well in Taiwan.*

It is interesting to note that her mother is aware that a native-speaking environment is critical to language learning. She does not worry that Jean does not speak either of her parents' mother-tongues; instead, she worries that there is no good English-learning environment for Jean to develop her English ability. She thinks the ban on English teaching is unnecessary.

越是禁止大家就會越想去學，現在還不是一堆人送到雙語或是全美幼稚園。

*The more restrictive the government in English learning, the more eager parents want their children to learn. A lot of parents send children to half-day or whole-day English kindergartens.*

She suggests that English learning should be 'the earlier the better' and the government should face the reality that parents urgently want their children to learn English, so the government should try to create a native-speaking environment for English learning to benefit the country's competitiveness.

我覺得孩子在自然的環境學英文最好，反而在學校變成一個學科學生其實很排斥。不該像現在國中英文一樣背誦學習，應該是早早就讓孩子在自然的環境中學英文。

*I think learning English in a natural environment is the best way. Pupils dislike English when it becomes a subject at school. We shouldn't teach English through recitations, like English teaching in secondary schools now. We should let children learn English in a natural environment as early as possible.*

She thinks English ability is essential for Jean, not only for the benefit of her future study and employment but also allow her to communicate with foreigners. Therefore, Jean started learning English in kindergarten (although not in an English immersion kindergarten) and never stopped.

因為覺得英文很重要，想要她不中斷學習，不想讓她輸在起跑點上...在這全球化的時代，學英文對她自己幫助很大，我覺得只有加分沒有減分，因為少了一種語言就會少了和別人溝通的機會。

*Because English is very important and I don't want her stop learning it or be behind from the start...In a globalised era, learning English is beneficial to herself. I think it only adds not minuses points. Minus one language means less opportunities to communicate with others*

Because her mother values English highly, she uses both punishment and reward to prompt Jean to learn English. For example, she requires Jean to study English every day, otherwise Jean is not allowed to watch TV or play on the computer. However, she also motivates Jean. If Jean gets high scores at school or her English teacher praises Jean, she will take her out for Jean's favourite meals, buy things Jean is eager for, or give her extra pocket money. She knows well that children lose interest or confidence easily, so she applies different strategies to encourage Jean.

當然鼓勵要多過於懲罰，因為我也會擔心越逼她她就完全放棄了，到時候吵著不去補英文我更頭大。

*Of course I encourage her more than punish her because I'm afraid she will give up learning English totally. It would be a big problem if she refuses to attend English cram school.*

## 4.6 Case F: Ray

Ray is a good example of how politics influences language ideology in Taiwan in both visible and invisible ways. His mother recognises that the monolingual policy by the KMT has had a great impact on their decision to speak Mandarin to their children. They speak Mandarin to their children for the sake of their education.

小時候我跟他爸爸上學學校都推行說國語運動，所以怕小孩上學不會說國語，所以就自然跟小孩說國語。

*When we were kids, we were forced to speak Mandarin at school. We were afraid that our kids could not speak Mandarin, like us, when they enter school in the future. Therefore, ever since they were born, we spoke Mandarin to them.*

The sociolinguistic environment and commonly-held stereotypes of different language speakers<sup>25</sup> reinforce their decision. However, she does find that she cannot express herself clearly in Mandarin sometimes and then she uses Minnan.

且我們這個年代感覺上說國語比較有唸書的樣子，講國語感覺上比較有水準，所以我們就很自然跟小孩說國語。

*Only literate people speak Mandarin in our generation. Speaking Mandarin makes people think (the speaker) is from higher class. So we speak Mandarin to our children unconsciously.*

His mother states that Ray's father is a supporter of the DPP and he thinks being a Taiwanese one should be able to speak Minnan. In the father's mind, language and ethnic identity are inseparable. In addition, Father's parents are monolingual-Minnan speakers and he thinks learning Minnan can help children communicate with their grandparents. In contrast, Ray's mother, who claims to be a KMT supporter, does not insist on speaking Minnan to the children. Unlike her husband's, her parents speak Mandarin, so it is less essential for her children to speak Minnan in order to talk with them and so she is not so keen to ask the children to learn Minnan.

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<sup>25</sup> See Section 2.3.2 for more details.



他爸爸在姐姐們比較大之後就開始比較常跟小孩說台語了，可能是開始覺得小孩不會說台語不能跟鄉下的爺爺奶奶溝通。但我感覺上沒什麼影響，大部分還是跟小孩說國語。

*Their father started to speak Taiwanese to them since they entered primary schools because he thought it's a pity that they could not communicate with their grandparents. Their grandparents speak only Taiwanese. But I think it's ok, so I didn't speak Taiwanese to them on purpose. I speak Mandarin to them most of time.*

On the other hand, his mother values English highly. She thinks competence in English can ensure children an easier and better life in the future. Her eldest daughter is studying in the USA. She sent her daughter to the USA because she thought studying in the USA could help her daughter learn both the major she is studying and English at the same time. She said she was so busy to speak English to Ray when he was young, but she tried to create an English-learning environment for him and let him learn by himself. She thinks young children are good at imitating.

當然如果可以越早越好啦，因為我覺得越小學習能力越強。像他在還沒上幼稚園之前就會ABC了，就是他自己看錄影帶學的，我們根本沒空教他，就是放錄影帶讓他自己看，我也不知道他怎麼學會的。所以我覺得小孩子的學習能力很強。或許只要給小孩環境，他們就可以學好吧。

*I think it's not reasonable because when it comes to language learning, I think it's always the earlier the better. As I said before, children are good at imitating and learning new things, especially foreign languages. He learned the alphabet by himself before he entered kindergarten. No one taught him at that time. I was too busy to teach him, so I played the videos only. I have no idea how he learned at that time. I think children are good at learning new things. Maybe they can learn a language well by simply providing an environment.*

Even now, she still encourages Ray to use English with his eldest sister.

他大姐在美國唸大學，我都會鼓勵他跟姐姐用英文寫信，或是講話時參雜一些英文。

*His oldest sister is studying in America now. So I always encourage him to write or talk to his sister in English.*

The family travels abroad once a year and she thinks it is effective in stimulating Ray to speak. She sent Ray to the language school because she thought English is important to his future study and job. She mentioned that it is common for almost every child to attend an English cram school, so the government ban on English teaching in kindergartens serves no purpose.

就讓大家自由選擇就好，沒必要規定不可以學英文。  
*I think there should be free options for parents. It's not necessary to ban English learning.*

Ray is studying in a private secondary school because she thinks it can help Ray to learn English better. Although his mother does not have specific targets for Ray's English learning (unlike, for example, Candy's mother or Ada's father of their children), she still wants Ray to be able to access an easier and smoother road through education and beyond. With English being valued in the present era, she does not want Ray to experience the sort of difficulties that she and Ray's father experienced in an earlier time because of their lack of Mandarin.

## **4.7 Case G: Max**

Max comes from a family in which Mandarin and Minnan are spoken. His grandparents, who are effectively monolingual Minnan speakers, live with the family, so Minnan is used at home most of time. Max's mother is Vietnamese, therefore has no Minnan, but she is taking Mandarin courses, so she speaks Mandarin to Max. She does not teach Max Vietnamese because he will not use it. His mother does not have specific attitudes towards mother-tongue teaching or English learning, but she thinks learning Minnan is good so that Max can communicate with his grandparents. In addition, she thinks it is advantageous if Max speaks one more language. However, she cannot give any specific advantages Max will get if he speaks Minnan expect communicating with his grandparents, referring to the difficulty she has in talking to them because her Minnan ability is limited.

Although the family annual income is comparatively low, Max attended a half-day English kindergarten because his father thinks that learning English is important. Max's mother also notes that it seems popular in Taiwan that every child learns English outside school. She mentions that the village in Vietnam that she comes from is very remote and poor, and almost every teenager goes to a big city to work after graduating from junior high school, including her and she does not speak English. However, even with her limited experience of learning English, she values English on the basis of her own travel experience because she thinks that travel to and from Vietnam would have been easier for her if she could speak English.

在機場很吃力，所以我覺得會說英文很重要。  
*I felt helpless in the airport, so I think being able to speak English is important.*

The family does not have any encounter with English use in their daily lives, nor any personal experience of learning or using it. The home environment is not literacy-rich because Max's father graduated from a senior vocational high school and Max's mother holds only a junior high school degree. His father is a food stall vendor and his mother a housewife, so they do not have much family cultural or financial capital to use to maximise Max's educational attainment. Sending Max to the language school seems to be a response to 'peer' pressure because his mother cannot give any specific reasons for the decision.

鄰居的小孩有在這補習，所以爸爸就說  
要送來這補習。

*The kids of our neighbour sent to this  
school, so Father decided to do the same.*

She goes to the language school with Max only once a week because on the other day he attends she goes to a Mandarin class. She goes with Max because she wants to learn English so that she can help Max if he has problems; however, she finds it difficult to help him because she does not attend the class regularly.

## **4.8 Case H: Leo**

Leo is growing up in a Minnan-speaking environment, where his parents speak Minnan to him most of time and Mandarin is his second language, so Leo is fluent in Minnan. Leo's mother has a positive attitude towards mother-tongue teaching because she feels it makes people value their heritage languages. His mother does not think about or plan language use at home consciously. It seems natural and spontaneous to her and his father that both of them speak Minnan to Leo because it is their first language.

The family annual income is low and his parents cannot afford to send Leo to an English cram school. Leo and his brother came to the language school two years ago because it offers certain □places to pupils from low-income families to learn English for free. The mother does not have any expectation of Leo's English learning. If the language school had not offered the opportunity, they could not have afforded any English lessons nor to help Leo with English learning.

我覺得學英文是有錢人的事，我們根本負擔不起。雖然幼稚園禁止，有錢人還是會想辦法讓孩子學英文。

*I think learning English is for the rich.  
I think learning English is for the rich.  
We can't afford at all. Even though  
English is banned in kindergartens, the  
rich still make sure their children learn  
English in different ways.*

Both parents graduated from senior vocational high schools and do not speak any English. Leo's father is a blue-collar worker and his mother is a housewife. Leo's mother thinks taking Leo to the school is tiring and time-consuming, but she still wants to seize the chance and see if it helps Leo's school performance. She hopes attending the school can be beneficial to Leo's future study and employment. Leo is in

a junior high school and his English at school is not satisfactory, and he has low motivation and interest in learning English. His mother thinks he is falling behind his classmates because he did not go to English cram schools in primary school. She is blaming the family's financial situation for Leo's low English attainment. She hopes going to this English language school can help him perform better at school and also increase his interests in English.

他開始好像有點吃力，可能是太晚才開始補英文吧！所以他跟不上其他同學，所以對英文不是很有興趣，也不是很積極在學英文，家裡也沒有環境鼓勵他學好英文。

*He started to fall behind, maybe it's because he went to the English cram school late. So he lost his interest in English and he didn't learn English actively. We can't afford to send him to a cram school to learn English well.*

She suggests that English teaching in primary school should start at first grade to benefit pupils from low-income families, which cannot afford to send their children to learn English outside school. She notes that a lot of children from wealthy families even learn English in kindergarten.

現在很多私立幼稚園都有教英文了，應該可以從小一就開始教，讓家庭負擔不起額外補習的小朋友也能提早有學英文的機會。

*Many kindergartens even teach English. It should be taught in first grade as it offers opportunities for children who can't go to English cram schools to learn English earlier.*

Although she does not see the importance of English in her personal life, yet she ‘imagines’ life will be easier for Leo if he has English ability. She tries to motivate Leo to learn English by using the examples of her and his father. She thinks their life is difficult because they did not go to university. She hopes Leo can learn English better than they did, which will be beneficial for him to enter college or future employment.

跟他說學好英文的優缺點，分析給他聽。跟他舉例說爸爸媽媽就是英文沒學好，所以沒上大學，因此工作比較辛苦，爸媽都希望他以後不要這麼辛苦。我們希望他以後比我們強，也比我們輕鬆。等他長大的時代，英語能力和大學都是不可或缺的找工作條件，如果能打好英文基礎就會終生受用。

*I told Leo about advantages and disadvantages of learning English. I used Father and I as examples. I told him that we have to work hard because we didn't learn English well, nor did we go to university. Our jobs are more tiring than others and we don't want it happens to him in the future. I want him to be better than us and work more easily than we do. English ability and an undergraduate degree are requirements in the future when he grows up. I want him to build good foundation of English learning to benefit himself in the rest of his life.*

## **4.9 Case I: Vera**

Vera's parents are both Minnan speakers. The home languages are Mandarin and Minnan. Vera's father has spoken Minnan to Vera since she was born to make sure she can communicate with older generations. He is proud that Vera speaks Minnan fluently and does not have any difficulties in learning Minnan at school. He believes children learn a language best in a native-speaking environment. He has positive attitudes towards teaching because it enables minority people to value their own ethnicities and cultures. Yet, he disagrees if the teaching is over-emphasised only for political reason. He thinks the government should not force Mainlanders to learn minority languages and the choice should remain a personal preference.

In addition, he was the only interviewee who did not worry about the ban on English teaching in kindergartens. He thinks the government must have consulted experts, and the decision must be professional and for the benefit of children's language development. He also agrees with the policy that English should be taught in third grade because first-graders and second-graders cannot control themselves. He thinks third-graders know better how to control themselves and are more patient, which enables them to learn English better.

幼稚園小孩各方面都很難控管，即使教英文也只會唱唱歌或玩遊戲，我覺得也不會學得好。倒不如等他們年紀大一點，理解力比較強的時候再學就好。

*Children are hard to control at kindergarten age. Even if kindergartens teach English, they sing songs or play games, which I don't think useful. Why not learn English when they become older and have better comprehension?*



Although he agrees with the policy, Vera attends English cram school at first grade. He indicates the reason was that there is a gap between primary and secondary English learning, and he does not want Vera to fall behind classmates when she enters secondary school. Besides, his friends who have secondary-school-children suggested he should send Vera to learn English earlier because it would be easier for her to cope with English learning in secondary school. He recognises English as an international language, but the reason he sends Vera to learn English is more education-driven. He wants Vera have a smoother road to higher education.

英文是以後聯考的科目，所以覺得補英文可以讓她以後比較輕鬆。甚至以後就業或繼續升學及出國，英文都是一項不可或缺的语言。

*English is a subject in (senior-high school and university) entrance exams. Attending an English cram school would make it easier for her in the future. English is indispensable for further study, a job or to go abroad.*

He thinks English is becoming more and more important in the labour market so he sits in every class to learn English with Vera to show her how important English is. The target he sets for Vera is to pass the GEPT. Even if he emphasises speaking ability (which is not the orientation of the school curriculum), it is because speaking is assessed in obtaining the GEPT certificates. He values English for its role in higher education account, instead of for communicative reasons. The family has never travelled abroad and has no personal connection with the outside world, so the father never mentions English as an inter-personal or inter-cultural tool. In fact, the way he weights Hakfa, Minnan and English is based on future value in the labour market.

像我是公務員，過幾年之後如果能通過英檢考試的可以加薪，如果沒通過會沒辦法晉級。

*For example, I am a public servant; if I pass the GEPT, I can earn more money, and if I don't pass, I will not be promoted.*

He also uses his learning experience as an example to encourage Vera to learn English well while she is still young. He thinks learning ability decreases with age. He thinks good English ability is a gain instead of a loss to Vera in every aspect.

現在我們一起學英文，我學得就沒有她快，常常會忘記上課的內容，她更應該趁年紀還小記憶力更好的時候打好底子，以後念書和找工作才會比較輕鬆。

*We are learning English together and I didn't learn as fast as she did and I forgot what learned from class easily. Therefore, she should learn English well as a foundation when she is young and has better memory. It makes it easier for her to study or work in the future.*

Because he values English highly for the sake of her future, he forces Vera to learn English every day and he thinks it works.

孩子在這個階段不是很能理解英文的重要性，所以不會主動學習，而且英文畢竟不是我們的國語，也不可能不費力氣就學好。

*Children at this age don't understand the importance of English. They won't learn English actively. English is not our national language and it's impossible to learn it effortlessly.*

#### **4.10 Case J: Eva**

Eva's parents are both Minnan speakers. However, Eva's mother notes that Minnan was only spoken occasionally while Eva was young and they switched to speak Mandarin completely after Eva went to school.

*Eva 自從上學後回家就都說國語，跟姐姐也是說國語，所以我們就很自然跟她們說國語了。*

*Eva started to speak Mandarin after schooling, and she speaks Mandarin to her sister. So we speak Mandarin to her naturally.*

Now the dominant language spoken at home is Mandarin and parents use Minnan only when they do not want children to overhear. Eva's mother thinks that the government should not insist on mother-tongue teaching because language maintenance can be determined by 'natural selection', just as happened in their family.

*社會有需求就會保留該語言，如果說的人不多就會消失，是很自然的現象，適者生存不適者淘汰，不用過度介入。*

*If the society needs the language, it survives; if seldom people speak it, it diminishes. It's a natural selection. The fittest survives. The government shouldn't get involved too much.*

Eva was sent to the English cram school only because she could not handle schoolwork. Eva did not start early because the parents want her to retain interest and learn English for a long term, instead of starting early and giving up soon. Eva's mother thinks it takes time and effort to learn English well, so she did not want to put too much pressure on Eva when she was too young.

The parents value English highly because of their personal experience with the outside world. The parents make pilgrimages to Avatar Meher BaBa's mausoleum in Meherabad, India every year, so that they realised the importance of English for

communicative reasons. They started to bring Eva with them for pilgrimages since 2008. Initially, they brought Eva abroad for religious reasons; then they found it was quite helpful to encourage Eva to speak English while they were in India. They think Eva improved a lot after her first trip abroad. They are also aware, however, of the instrumental value of English in education and the labour market.

每年出國都需要用到英文，所以我們才覺得小孩一定要學英文。加上聯考英文也是一科，以後找工作若是管理人才也都要具備英文能力，所以希望她把英文基礎打好底子，至少要基礎溝通沒有障礙，如果她以後長大有理想有抱負，想出國念書等等，也會很有優勢。

*We used English every time when we went abroad, so we think our children need to learn English. Also it's a subject of entrance exams and managerial jobs require English ability. We hope she can have a good foundation of English proficiency, at least basic communicative ability. If she is ambitious when she grows up, like studying abroad, it is a benefit.*

Her attitude towards language policy is market-driven. She thinks the government should not ban English teaching in kindergartens because everyone thinks English is important. English-immersion kindergartens result from the society's need. She thinks that those who want English-immersion kindergartens will vote against the government if the MOE insists on the ban.

就讓市場機制決定就好，人民是消費者，有權力自己選擇阿。

*The government should let the market decide. People are customers and they should be able to choose by themselves.*

She thinks education is a commodity now and people, as customers, should be able to choose the schools they want. She has quite optimistic attitudes even though education has become marketised. She claims that the Mathew Effect is getting more obvious nowadays and rich people have different goals from 'the ordinary people' ('*yi ban ren*' 一般人). People should be able to pay for what they want. The English teaching ban frightens people who want English and causes their resentment. She further claims that the government should not worry too much that English may

interfere with language development if it is taught in kindergartens because she does not regard singing English songs as ‘real teaching’ at all.

講白話點，學英語是耐力賽不是短跑，看的是誰學得久不是誰學得早；看的是質也不是量。像幼稚園如果只是唱唱英文歌，哪能真得學到甚麼有用的英文。

*Frankly speaking, English learning is not a dash but a marathon. It matters how long one learns it, not how early one starts; quality matters instead of quantity. Children don't learn real English at all simply by singing songs in kindergartens.*

As Eva's mother values English speaking ability more than other skills, she thinks the government should try to improve English teaching. She agrees that English teaching should start at third grade, but she thinks the textbooks and teaching methods should be livelier and focus more on communication exercises.

不然提早學英文還是教出跟以前我們這年代的家長一樣不會說英文的學生。

*Or pupils will not be able to speak English, like our generation, even if they learn English earlier than we did.*

In addition, she also criticises the curriculum and policy. Since the 2004 Education Reform, the MOE has not published uniform textbooks. Instead, the MOE gives guidelines to publishers only, and the schools can choose their own textbooks. In addition, the government gives leeway to local schools to decide when to start teaching English. She thinks these policies puzzle parents, and force them to send children to English cram schools in order not to let them fall behind at the starting point in the competition for English learning.

而且學英文的時間各地和各校也不統一，應該要全國統合一下。

*Different cities or schools start teaching English at different grades, the government should unify the country as a whole.*

Apart from these policies, she also complains about how English is taught at school. She thinks that although textbooks are more interesting than the time she was

in school, teachers still use traditional teaching methods. She says school teachers still ask pupils to memorise words, phrases and grammar and these methods bore pupils and make them reluctant to learn English. She also notices the problem of pupil numbers in English class.

大班教學對‘語言’很沒有意義，學生還是把英文當成數學一樣用聽的，遇到外國人還是不敢開口說。

*Learning ‘language’ in a big class is meaningless. Pupils ‘listen to’ English and learn it as learning ‘math’. They dare not to speak English when they see foreigners.*

Since she values English speaking ability highly, she speaks English to Eva everyday to train Eva’s speaking skill. When Eva was young, she read English storybooks to her. Even now, she spends three to four hours a week watching movies or cartoons with Eva. She notices Indian English is different from what Eva learns at school, so she encourages Eva to watch movies and teaches Eva there are varieties of English. She also sits in every class to learn with Eva and helps Eva review the materials after class.

Eva’s mother’s attitude towards education is so market-driven that she even gives extra pocket money to encourage Eva if she reviews English actively.

目前的作法是每天只要複習一單元給額外零用金2元。

*I also give her 2 NT dollars if she reviews one unit.*

#### **4.11 Case K: Kevin**

Kevin's parents are both Minnan speakers, but Mandarin is spoken most of time at home because it is the medium of instruction at school. Both parents were forced to speak Mandarin at school and they do not want Kevin to enter school with no Mandarin, as they did. They used to speak Minnan to Kevin occasionally and more often after Kevin started learning Minnan at school. Kevin's mother has a positive attitude towards teaching, otherwise she thinks Minnan may disappear. Also, she hopes the policy can be carried out consistently.

以前禁止說台語，沒想到現在鼓勵，希望不要因為政治因素又三分鐘熱度。  
*It was forbidden to speak Minnan in the past, but now it's encouraged. I hope it's not political and being a hot issue for only a while.*

She thinks mother-tongue teaching should drill pupils' speaking ability, instead of reading and writing since heritage languages are maintained for daily communication and cultural purposes. In fact, all languages in Taiwan, except Mandarin, do not have written characters. They are written down by borrowing Mandarin characters. She thinks being able to communicate orally in Minnan is the most important skill for Kevin. She says Kevin speaks Minnan with a Mandarin accent and it is funny. The school should train Kevin's fluency, instead of teaching him how to identify the pinyin system.

She thinks learning mother-tongue is important, but learning English is a personal choice and the government should not forbid it. She thinks the ban in kindergartens is too brutal and arbitrary.

國家應該尊重各種學習意願，讓家長自行決定就好。

*The authority should respect every learning preference and let parents decide.*

Kevin started learning English in first grade, but he had difficulties comprehending after grammar was taught, so he dropped out of the cram school. The parents planned to wait until Kevin had more comprehension, but Kevin started learning English in third grade again when the mother found he was falling behind other classmates. Many of Kevin's classmates started learning English in kindergarten, which interrupted the mother's plan to send Kevin to English cram school a bit later. In fact, she says she agrees with the policy (starting teaching English in third grade), but other parents' behaviour worries her. She notes that almost every child is learning English, so she makes herself believe an early start can reduce Kevin's burden in the future. Therefore, Kevin attends an English cram school again in third grade.

She worries about the English language policy more than English teaching practices at school. She notices that English teaching starts in different grades in different schools in Taichung and it causes panic among parents.

起始點不同很容易造成家長擔心。既然大家都偷跑，為什麼不提早開放學英文？據他們老師說他們班幾乎都是小一（或更早）就開始補英文

*Parents worry about it a lot. Since some schools start teaching earlier stealthily, Why can't the government ease the policy? Kevin's teacher told me almost everyone went to English cram schools in first grade or earlier.*

Like Eva's mother, Kevin's mother worries about the curriculum, the policy and the textbooks, too. She thinks that English teaching methods and materials are in



chaos now and the quality remains as problematic as before, even after several education reforms were carried out.

教改也沒看到成效，都是口號，英語教育還是教不出敢開口的學生，為了不讓孩子以後放棄英文，只好讓孩子在外面補習。

*I don't see any effects after education reforms. They are all lip services. Pupils are still afraid to speak English. Parents send them to cram schools to help them not to give up on English.*

She also mentions that the inconsistency in English teaching at schools and the ban on English teaching in kindergartens accelerates parents' desire to 'buy' an English teaching outside schools. She thinks only children from families who care about English learning or are from higher SES can afford to learn English well, which promises these children a better life. As a result, English remains a form of capital of the rich, and it drives a vicious circle, widening the gap between the rich and the poor. Her opinion is similar to Leo's mother in this respect.

Unlike Candy's or Ada's families, Kevin's family does not have personal connections with the 'outside' world, yet Kevin's mother still considers being able to speak English is an irreversible consequence of globalisation and therefore everyone should learn English well. However, the reason why she thinks English is important for children's competitiveness remains vague. She does not give any examples or any personal experiences.

我覺得全民的英語能力是國家競爭力的  
一個指標！看報紙說現在台灣學童的英  
語能力是全亞洲倒數第三，實在很怕孩  
子以後沒競爭力，怎麼在地球村生存。

*In my opinion, the English ability of people can be seen as an indicator of the country's competitiveness. Newspaper reports that children's English ability is the third from the last. How can children survive if they are not competitive?*

She thinks that learning English as a school subject causes pressure on pupils and reduces their interest if teaching methods or materials are not interesting. Therefore, she suggests that the government should make English a second language in Taiwan and start teaching English in kindergartens so as to reduce the observed dichotomy between rich and poor in terms of learning English.

我覺得倒不如政府就統一看是要小一或是幼稚園就教英文，讓英文變成第二語言，這樣就不會有學習差距的問題，也不會造成對沒有補習的小朋友不公平；加上英文變成第二語言，這樣就有環境讓孩子說英文，全民的英文能力才能大為提升。

*I think the government should start teaching English in first grade, or even in kindergartens and also make English a second language. Then there will be no differences of English learning among pupils and it won't be unfair for those who don't attend cram schools. If English becomes a second language, there will be a natural environment for children to speak English, which may improve all citizens' proficiency dramatically.*

Another reason why she is in favour of English as a second language comes from her own learning experience. Many people in her generation learned English at school but did not have occasion to practice English after school and she thinks most people stop learning English after graduation. So, as she puts it,

很多人畢業之後英文都還給老師了

*Many people 'return English back to their English teachers' after graduating.*

She claims that if there is a native-speaking environment for people to practice English, their English ability is maintained. Since she worries about Kevin's learning attainment and competitiveness with other classmates, she encourages him to study English in various ways. She requires Kevin to listen to English broadcasts and read English magazines for an hour every day. She gives extra pocket money if Kevin finishes reading additional storybooks or magazines. She also reminds Kevin of the importance of English and gives him some incentives, such as going to Disneyland in America or buying him a *Play Station 3* after his English improves.

#### **4.12 Case L: Barry**

Barry's parents are both Minnan speakers. The dominant language at home is Mandarin but they sometimes speak Minnan to Barry. Father does not insist on Barry being a Mandarin-Minnan bilingual; as long as Barry can understand elder family members and relatives, Father thinks it is enough. He does not have specific attitudes towards teaching.

The major reason why he sends Barry to the English cram school is because he wants Barry to learn English systematically. He tried to teach Barry before but it was not effective because speaking English to Barry only came to his mind occasionally and Barry did not get enough input at home.

*在家沒有英文環境，這對學語言很不  
利，所以送到補習班，希望至少每個禮  
拜有三到四小時的美語環境。*

*There is no English learning environment  
at home, which is harmful to language  
learning, so I send him to the cram  
school, where there are at least three to  
four hours for him to learn English.*

Barry's father strongly disagrees with the ban in kindergarten because he thinks learning English is a case of 'the earlier the better for their future'. He sees English as an international language for communication and he suggests that the government should encourage or legitimate a Mandarin-English bilingual environment for children to listen to and speak English naturally, instead of prohibiting it. Like Kevin's mother, Barry's father also believes that making English a second language in Taiwan can improve everyone's English ability.

In addition, the main reason why he chooses this English language school is because it has native-speaking teachers. He wants Barry to learn English in a native-speaking environment. The family takes trips abroad almost every year and his father thinks it facilitates Barry's English speaking and listening skills. He notes that Barry speaks English to foreigners (no matter which nationalities) spontaneously, but not to his parents.

學英文還是要跟外國人學，才能有學習的環境。跟我們說沒幾句就轉回國語了。

*We should learn English from native speakers because it provides a natural learning environment. He switched back to Mandarin quickly whenever I tried to speak English to him.*

Although he values English highly, he does not care much about Barry's English grades. Rather, he is concerned whether Barry remains motivated and learns English happily or not. He wants to immerse Barry in an English-speaking environment and hopes Barry never gives up learning English because it is very important. Therefore, he always encourages him and gives him confidence. He motivates Barry by making Barry feel he is improving all the time. He criticises English teaching methods in school as being too traditional.

現在的英語學習很重視溝通能力，學校還是過度重視背單字及文法，我覺得失去提早教英文的意義。越早學英文應該是要越有趣才對，怎麼反而提早給小孩子壓力呢？

*English learning nowadays emphasises more on communicative skills, yet schools still focus on vocabulary and grammar recitations. It hinders the purpose of teaching English early. English teaching is supposed to be interesting at an early age. Why put pressure on children earlier?*

Barry is from an upper-middle income family. Both of Barry's parents are involved a lot in Barry's education. His mother actively participates in Barry's school activities and his father helps review Barry's homework. Both of the parents speak English to Barry occasionally. Barry's mother is in the Parents Association now and she volunteers to teach English every two weeks in 'Morning English time'. His father suggests that the government or authority should notice how to teach English effectively and efficiently at school.

她幫忙帶動唱，發現小朋友反應都不錯。甚至有小朋友覺得晨間英語比較有趣，不用背單字或句子，造成反感，應該是年紀小的孩子都喜歡快樂學英文吧！政府或學校還是相關單位應該要注意到這點才對。

*My wife only teaches songs and the feedback is positive. A few children even think 'Morning English Time' is more interesting than the English class. Children don't need to memorise vocabulary or phrases which demotivates them. Young children enjoy learning English happily! The government, schools or related agents should notice it.*

Barry's father deliberately bought English versions of Chinese fables not only to convey moral education but also to motivate Barry with familiar Chinese stories. He thinks that learning English from stories with which Barry is familiar makes English easier to comprehend. In addition, he thinks Chinese stories make more sense to Barry. If Barry understands the stories, he is more willing to read.

### **4.13 Case M: Ruby**

Ruby is a case from Chiayi, southern Taiwan, an area where Minnan is more commonly used than in the north or centre of the island. Ruby's parents are both Minnan-speakers, but speak Minnan and Mandarin to their children. Ruby's father owns a garage, and her mother helps there; Ruby grows up in an environment where Minnan, the community language, is spoken most of the time. Even after Ruby has started going to school, she goes to the garage after school. Her mother also says it is inconvenient if Ruby does not speak Minnan because they live in Chiayi. She has very positive attitudes towards teaching not only for communicative reasons but also for the sake of language maintenance and ethnic identity.

不然很多語言都要消失了，像現在很多  
閩南的小孩子都不會說台語或是帶有國  
語腔。而且身為台灣人就要會說台語。

*Otherwise, many languages are about to  
disappear. Many Minnan children do not  
speak Minnan or speak with a Mandarin  
accent. Besides, being a Taiwanese one  
should be able to speak Minnan.*

She criticises the current phenomenon that almost every child attends an English cram school. She thinks schools and the government should improve the quality of English teaching in schools and thereby reduce this widespread phenomenon of sending children to cram schools. She says learning English in cram schools is misplacing priorities. She notes that going to English cram schools is taken for granted so that teachers even presume every pupil has learned (and should learn) English before they enter school. She claims it is not fair for those who do not (or cannot afford to) attend cram schools. She exemplifies this with Ruby's class:

*Ruby 學校老師曾經跟一位家長說小孩子的英文成績不好是因為沒有補習。怎麼會孩子的學習好壞是因為有沒有補習呢?那學校教育的目的又是甚麼?補習只是輔助阿!*

*Ruby's English teacher once told a parent that her child performed badly in English and it was because she had never attended an English cram school. If pupils' performance is determined by whether attending a cram school or not, then what's the purpose of schooling? Attending a cram school should be supplementary.*

She criticises teachers' attitudes, stating that they should not presume every pupil has learned English before coming to school. She was planning to send Ruby to learn English after she enters secondary school because she thinks English is important but she does not want to demotivate Ruby by forcing her to learn too early. She thinks Ruby should learn English happily in primary school. However, she did not want the teacher to say the same thing to Ruby and she did not want Ruby to fall behind other classmates. Therefore, Ruby attended an English cram school in fifth grade. She thinks it is acceptable if Ruby does not get high scores because English is so important that she does not want Ruby to feel stressed or she may give up.

*我知道英文很重要，但是也不應該過度強調或是過度學習，不然會揠苗助長，如果讓孩子排斥反而會造成反效果，我才不希望這樣，我希望學英文是長期的事。*

*I know English is important, but we shouldn't over-emphasise it either. Otherwise, it may have bad results, such as rejecting English. I don't want that to happen. I hope learning English is a long-term activity.*

Apart from teachers' attitudes, she also worries about the language policy. She thinks the policy changes all the time and it is difficult for parents to follow. She claims that the inconsistency of language policy is a reason why parents send children to cram schools.

教育部的規定朝令夕改，讓家長很難遵守。法規應該深思熟慮且請教專家之後再公布，公布了就不要一變再變，或是換政黨就換法令，讓家長覺得小孩子像白老鼠一樣一直被實驗。

*The (language) policy of MOE changes all the time and it makes parents difficult to follow. The MOE should consider carefully or consult experts before implementing a policy. Once implemented, it shouldn't be changed easily or due to the change of ruling party. It makes us think our children are guinea pigs.*

Although she thinks English is important, she does not experience it herself; it is more like hearsay. She accepts that everyone says English is important and follows the trend to send Ruby to an English cram school. She hopes Ruby can benefit from it in the future as well. The family cannot create an English-learning environment for Ruby or become involved directly in her education. All she can do is to seek help from English cram schools.

我有聽一位親戚說他們外商公司的翻譯，光是兼任的時數賺的錢就比他們專職員工還可觀。

*I heard my relative said that the translator in her company earned more than she did as a full-time employee, even it's a part-time job.*

She hopes Ruby can have an easier job or a more professional job, unlike her father who is a blue-collar worker. Although the family makes quite a lot of money, she thinks Ruby's father's job is a labouring job of low status. As an example, she thinks being an English translator is an easy job and it makes a good living too.

我希望 Ruby 以後工作可以輕鬆一點，不要像我和爸爸一樣賺辛苦錢。

*I hope Ruby can have an easy job in the future, unlike her father and I who work hard.*



#### **4.14 Case N: Danny**

Danny is a case from Taipei, the capital of Taiwan, where Mandarin is the dominant language of daily life. Mandarin is the dominant language at home too because of this external sociolinguistic influence and also their grandparents speak Mandarin, although they do not live with the family.

可能是從念書以來就開始說國語，上班之後也大部分都跟同事說國語，所以回到家就很自然跟孩子說國語。

*Maybe it's because we have been speaking Mandarin since we entered school and we speak to colleagues in Mandarin most of time, so it's natural that we speak Mandarin to the children.*

The sociolinguistic environment not only influences their attitudes towards Minnan but also English. Danny's mother sends Danny to a half-day English kindergarten because there are many foreigners in Taipei and she hopes Danny will be able to speak to them. She places great value on the importance of English. She thinks English is important in every aspect, such as study, employment or having chances to talk to others and expand personal relationships. She claims learning English well is definitely beneficial to Danny's future. Danny's father is a company manager and he goes abroad on business frequently; therefore, both parents think English ability is important for Danny.

每個國民都該具備基本的語言能力，尤其是以商業為主的地區，更應該重視語言溝通。像台灣是以進出口貿易為主，學好英文更是一個加分的工具。

*Every citizen should have basic communicative ability, especially in commercial areas. Taiwan depends a lot on the import and export trade. Learning English well is a bonus.*

At the moment, she not only sends Danny to an English cram school but also hires a private English tutor for three hours a week to develop Danny's speaking ability and also help him with schoolwork. The father is busy and she is afraid she cannot support Danny's English learning; therefore, she tries to create an English-learning environment for him. She thinks English speaking ability is more importance than other skills, so she makes him be immersed in an English-speaking environment as much as possible. She is afraid to speak English even though she has learned English for many years, and she does not want that to happen to Danny.

In her opinion, a language is a communicative tool and it is important in daily life. She cannot understand why the government banned English teaching in kindergartens and there are still many expensive whole-day or half-day English kindergartens regardless of the ban. She thinks the government should make English accessible to every child, instead of prohibiting English teaching, which allows the rich to enlarge the gap between themselves and others by using their financial advantage to obtain valuable cultural resources. Her statement is similar to those of Leo's mother's and Kevin's mother.

進入小學之後也發現每個小朋友的英文程度差距越來越大，何不統一從小就把英文當第二語言學習，不要讓偷跑造成差距。

*I found wider gaps among children's English abilities. Why don't we teach English as a second language in order not to widen the gap resulted from learning English stealthily outside formal schooling.*

She suggests that the government should allow the teaching of English in first grade throughout the country. She wonders whether the ban is because of a limited budget or a concern over interference with children's language development that led the government to withdraw English teaching from first grade. Different cities or schools start teaching English at different grades and this hinders Taiwan's competitiveness.

堂數不需要多，但是有其必要讓孩子越早接觸...我有看過其他報導說其實幼童從小接觸英文並不會影響日後的中文能力或理解能力。

*We don't need many classes but we need to make children learn it earlier...I saw a report saying that it won't interrupt children's Mandarin learning or comprehension even if they learn English early.*

In addition, she has her own beliefs about English learning. She thinks the quality of English teaching depends on what and how English is taught in class. She suggests that pupils should be placed in differentiated classes according to their achievement levels and the size of a class should be as small as possible.

現在小孩都有補習，像 Danny 是二年級才又開始，但是有些小朋友從幼稚園開始就不間斷，程度明顯比 Danny 好很多，可是都在同一班，我不懂這樣老師怎麼上課。

*Almost every child attends English cram schools. Danny stopped learning English for two years, but some of his classmates have been learning since kindergarten. Their proficiency is much better Danny's but they are in the same class. I don't know how the teacher teaches.*

She thinks English is so important that she has to keep Danny motivated. She thinks Danny is optimistic and out-going, which is good for learning languages because he is not shy to speak. But Danny is lazy and loses interests easily, so she cannot push him too much. For example, she always encourages him with something he likes. She keeps reminding Danny of the importance of English or telling Danny that he needs to speak English well in order to take photos with Mickey in Disneyland in America. She thinks encouragement works because she finds Danny is more

confident than before. She hopes Danny can make best use of English in every aspect and she does not want Danny only to score high in English exams at school. As long as Danny uses English outside school settings, she thinks the investment is worthwhile.

給他正面的鼓勵和肯定，讓他覺得自己英文一直都在進步，這樣才對有自信，正增強想學英文的動機，並告訴他學英文每個人都會遇到瓶頸，只要努力克服就可以更進一步，要他勇敢面對不可以放棄。我希望他對英文能夠長期保有熱忱，因為語言是需要長期的接觸和學習的，不是短期就可以速成。

*I encourage him positively to reinforce his confidence in English learning and also motivate him. I tell him that everyone faces difficulties while learning English. Once he faces the music, then he can improve; so he needs to be brave and never give up. I hope he can maintain interest in English learning for a long time because learning a language well requires long-term immersion and study. It can't be achieved by a shortcut.*

## **Chapter 5 – Data Analysis**

In this chapter, I use Curdt-Christiansen's (2009) family language policy model as a basic framework to analyse the data I collected from 14 families. The parents' language ideologies of language and language learning are discussed first. Then the macro- and micro-factors which underpin the parents' language ideologies are analysed. Finally, language management and practice at home are summarised.

### **5.1 Parents' Language Ideology**

Parents' language ideologies are their attitudes towards different languages. LetsMinnan (2009) asserts that a language can only survive and be passed on from one generation to another if the parents or the family see the value of such a language and its associated culture and take on the responsibility for passing these on. Guardado (2006) also states that language practices "affect, and are affected by, the linguistic, cultural and social identities of the family members" (p.56). Together, these various factors constitute a range of macro- and micro-level influences on parents' language ideologies and will have an impact on language management and language practices at home.

#### **5.1.1 Ideology of Language**

In my study, the parents' attitudes towards a language or how family language policy is carried out at home are influenced by the functions parents see a language as having. Their ideologies of a language can be categorised according to four functions:

language for employment, language for cultural and inter-cultural interactions, language for daily functional use and language for bestowing and demanding status. These four functions provide an answer to my first research question. Many parents believe a language is closely linked to employment and the labour market opportunity; for example, Ada's father thinks English proficiency will enable Ada to access higher education and better jobs and Eva's mother thinks English ability is required for high-level jobs in the labour market. Some parents think a language is used for community and cultural maintenance; for example, Tracy's mother claims being able to speak different Taiwanese languages is beneficial for cross-ethnic communication and cross-cultural understanding in Taiwan. Other parents consider a language is for daily functional life; for example, Ruby's mother thinks it is inconvenient to live in Chiayi if Rudy does not speak Minnan since it is the commonly-spoken language in the community. Some parents rank different languages in relation to social class stratification; for example, Ray's mother thinks speaking Mandarin is a sign of being educated and Leo's mother thinks English is for the rich. The following table shows the functions of each language perceived by the interviewees in my study.

	<b>Instrumentalism</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Culture/Communication</b>	<b>Daily life</b>
<b>Mandarin</b>	✓	✓	✓ (national)	✓ (national)
<b>English</b>	✓	✓	✓ (global)	
<b>Minnan</b>			✓ (local)	✓ (local)
<b>Hakfa</b>				

**Table 5: Functions of Different Languages in Taiwan**

Because parents view languages differently, their attitudes towards Mandarin, Minnan, Hakfa and English vary as well. In Taiwan, Mandarin has enjoyed its privileged status since 1949 and English over the past three decades. No minority-language-speaking parents seem to question the status of Mandarin and they are all happy to use Mandarin as the dominant language (or even the only) language at home. In Jean's family, Mandarin is the only language used at home because it is the medium of instruction at school and the parents do not want to confuse Jean by speaking too many languages to her. Ray's mother also points out a rooted stereotype in people's mind that speaking Mandarin is an indicator of being educated or literate, which reflects the higher social status of Mandarin and Mandarin speakers in Taiwan. Now, everyone speaks Mandarin because all go to school. This is a remnant of an earlier phase in Taiwan's history; to a larger extent, English replaces Mandarin's linguistic marker nowadays.

Overwhelmingly, all parents in the sample think that learning English is important, even if some of them cannot give specific reasons; but, this is not remarkable since all parents are sending their children to this language school. Kevin's mother thinks English is important in the globalised world and it should be the second language in Taiwan. Other parents think English is important because it is the only compulsory foreign language at school and in secondary and tertiary entrance exams. That is, they are accepting an 'official' view of its importance rather than deciding for themselves. This, in some cases, contrasts with their views on minority-language teaching, where some reject the official perspective. In addition, Ada's father thinks English provides access to the 'outside world' and he dismisses the importance of learning Taiwanese languages, which contrasts with the ideas of Ray's father and Tracy's mother. Ada's father sees English as an 'external' not

‘internal’ language and a language of ‘opportunity’; this position is similar to that of the majority of parents. Since English has become an international language, its use value is high in various aspects such as travel, study, shopping, informational access and employment; almost every parent sees instrumental benefits of learning English. They believe English can give their children access to better lives and more opportunities in the future. In addition to instrumental advantages, Tracy’s mother and Jean’s mother value English as a communication tool for the appreciation of different cultures.

Although English is not an indigenous language in Taiwan, it enjoys a high status, like Mandarin. For example, Eva’s mother believes high-level jobs require English ability. English plays a role in social stratification and class mobility. Other parents, like Candy’s mother, Ray’s mother and Ruby’s mother, value the ‘status’ of English highly too. English reinforces existing advantage and its material and ‘symbolic’ role is rooted in many parents’ minds. Monica’s father even sees speaking English as a way to fulfil his ‘American dream’. Being able to speak English becomes a synonym for having a better ‘life style’ and higher status among many parents. Kevin’s mother, however, claims English is a form of cultural capital available most obviously to the rich through conveying of their financial capital. Similarly, Leo’s mother, who is from a lower SES background, thinks that English is a commodity which only the rich can buy. It becomes a ‘vicious’ cycle since English opens up access to the better paid jobs, which allow parents to invest in the cultural capital of English, for their children, who therefore have greater opportunity to obtain high-paid, high-status jobs, and so on, thereby entrenching the gap between exclusion and inclusion.



Minnan and Hakfa, on the other hand, are treated differently from Mandarin and English in minority-language-speaking families. Since Mandarin and English are the only two languages assessed at school, none of the parents sees the formal educational importance of Minnan and Hakfa. Therefore, the instrumental values of these two languages are low. In addition, because of the previous Mandarin-monolingual policy, the status of minority languages is low.

Minnan is less threatened with disappearing compared to other minority languages in these families. Some Minnan-speaking parents regard it as a communicative tool for maintaining inter-generational links within the family (and, in Ruby's mother's case, outside the family). Attitudes towards home language maintenance among parents and grandparents play an important role in language policy formation. Guardado (2006) suggests that family members, especially grandparents provide social, cultural and linguistic support to the families and facilitate "the creation of spaces for L1 maintenance and cultural identity to develop on a continuous basis" (p.66). Although grandparents are not interviewed in my study and their views and influences are not explored directly, being able to speak Minnan in order to communicate with grandparents or elder generations seems to be an important reason why Minnan is spoken in some families. Further research into this could provide important insight into the process of intergenerational language shift in Taiwan.

Other Minnan-speaking families recognise the importance of maintaining linguistic diversity and cultural identity. Tracy's mother focuses on the multilingual environment in Taiwan so that she thinks it is more practical (and important) for children to learn Taiwanese languages than English in order to communicate with

different people and appreciate different cultures. Eva's mother believes in linguistic Darwinism, that the fittest language will survive in the society, just as English learning remains popular even though it is banned in kindergartens. They reflect that the government should not interfere in language policies, such as the ban on English in kindergartens and the imposition of mother-tongue education in primary schools. Vera's father and Kevin's mother both think minority language learning should be a parental choice, not a governmental policy.

In contrast, no Hakfa-speaking parents state the importance of maintaining Hakfa in the family. Jean's mother states seldom people speak Hakfa in daily life. Monica's father would rather Monica learn Minnan instead of Hakfa because of its use by more speakers and across a wider geographic area.

Although it is difficult, it is possible to maintain Minnan or Hakfa, particularly if parents accept the notion that developing bilingualism is a process that must be consciously supported, reaffirmed, and validated by daily practices and choices (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2009). However, few Minnan-speaking parents encourage Minnan-Mandarin bilingualism and no Hakfa-speaking parents encourage Hakfa-Mandarin bilingualism at home. King and Fogle (2006) believe that parents who want to sustain bilingualism at home are those who are advantaged bilinguals themselves and vice versa. Hakfa-speaking parents do not see any advantages in speaking Hakfa in Taichung, so they are not keen to transmit Hakfa to their children.

In contrast, almost all parents practice English with their children consistently and actively engage in practices that encourage positive attitudes toward English and English speakers. These are the behaviours DeCapua and Wintergerst (*ibid*) consider

as critical to maintaining a heritage language yet they use them to retain English. In many cases, the language ideology that undoubtedly views Mandarin as the dominant home language coexists with the strong desire for English as a form of linguistic capital, becoming what Song (2010) calls an “economic commodity” and contributing to “elite cosmopolitanism” (p.35).

Some parents change the languages used at home because of political (e.g. national monolingual policy), economic (e.g. access to the labour market), social (e.g. number of speakers) or educational reasons (e.g. medium of instruction and exam subjects). For example, one of the main reason why most parents send their children to learn English is that they want to make sure their children are “ready” when they enter school, or even ahead of other children. Stavans *et al* (2009) claim that the parents’ “stepping aside approach” (p.124) may result in an impoverished L1 environment or even language shift at home. Only Ray’s father and Ruby’s mother show loyalty to Minnan and perceive Minnan as part of their cultural identity. As a result, it is not surprising to see what LetsMinnan (2009) has pointed out, that language shift and/or death and low esteem accredited to minority languages will generally happen in those families which lack linguistic loyalty and affiliation.

### **5.1.2 Ideology of Language Learning**

Parents’ ideologies of language learning also influence their language management and language practice at home. English has higher ‘status’ and more instrumental value than Taiwanese minority languages; therefore, parents care more about English learning than minority language transmission and culture maintenance. All parents have common theories of how to learn English well but few of them care

about acquiring two Taiwanese languages at the same time. For example, Jean's mother is afraid that learning too many Taiwanese languages at the same time may cause confusion, so only Mandarin is spoken at home. Her worry is similar to those of Song's (2010) Korean immigrant families in America. Song finds that Korean parents worry that bilingual education may interfere their children's academic and linguistic development so that they would rather their children learn English monolingually at the cost of Korean language loss in their children's generation. However, Krashen (2003) believes that good first language development stimulates advanced cognitive development and hence promotes better second/ foreign language acquisition.

Ruby's mother thinks multiple language learning is not a distraction so both Mandarin and Minnan are spoken to her children. Only Tracy's mother talks about how to learn minority languages. She thinks that the government should edit interesting and effective textbooks for mother-tongue education. Taking Minnan as an example, she thinks the '*pinyin*' system in the textbook is too difficult. Teachers should focus on communication fluency, instead of how to read phonetic symbols.

The two main beliefs about English learning among parents are: the presence of a 'natural' language environment and 'the earlier the better'. Nearly all parents claim the importance of a 'native-speaking' environment for learning English; most parents chose this language school because they believe contact with English-speaking natives is beneficial to their children's English learning. Kevin's mother even suggests the government should make English the second language in Taiwan in order to create a bilingual environment for children. Barry's father and Candy's mother also recognise the advantages of Mandarin-English bilingualism, in terms of widening their children's future horizons of opportunity. It is worth noting that no parent

mentioned about generic advantages of bilingualism, such as its potential for improved cognitive functioning (as discussed in Chapter 2, above).

A lot of parents believe an early start is advantageous in English learning; they think ‘the earlier the better’. Monica’s father, Leo’s mother and Danny’s mother even suggest pupils should start learning English in Grade 1. However, Eva’s mother, Vera’s father and Ruby’s mother hold different opinions. Both Vera’s father and Eva’s mother reject the value of an early start and believe English learning takes effort and time beyond the capacities of very young children. Eva’s mother thinks success in English learning depends on how long a child learns, not on how early he starts. Vera’s father suggests children can learn English later when they have better comprehension of language structure and grammar. Ruby’s mother does not want an early start because she thinks it puts pressure on children.

Interestingly, the ideologies of language learning that my interviewees gave me were contradictory to Krashen’s advice (2003). Krashen declared, in a conference held in Taipei, Taiwan in 2003, that there is no need for preschool English or cram school English because there is no practical demand for young children who do not live in English-speaking countries to speak English so early. He believes there is an urgent practical need for early second language competence for minority language children in Taiwan and starting later is a preferred option in foreign language programmes. He proposes that in a context like Taiwan, English teaching methodology should be based on comprehensible input, include recreational reading, not be obsessed about a super-early start, aim to develop intermediates (not perfect English speakers), not sacrificing developing the first language, and providing the means for continuing to learn English after formal schooling ends. It should perhaps

be noted that Krashen's paper does, in places, suggest he is not fully aware of the complex language situation in Taiwan, in which Mandarin is the first language for some, the second for many and the medium of instruction for all. Particularly in view of the DPP-introduced indigenous language policy, English is likely to be a third language for many children and for these children the 'sacrificing developing the first language' may also be an issue in learning Mandarin. As my research has shown, the status of the various languages in use in Taiwan is complex and simple labels like 'first' or 'second' language must be used with caution.

Apart from these two ideologies, parents also share other opinions. A lot of parents discuss how to motivate children's interests and give rewards or punishment to their own children. They think maintaining motivation is critical for long-term English learning. Most of them motivate their children by giving rewards or positive examples; for example Monica's father presents an idealised future with his "beautiful American dreams" and Danny's mother explains the importance of English ability using the example of making a trip to Disneyland in America. Vera's father and Ada's father force their children to study English under the threat of not being allowed to play if they do not do so, while Jean's mother and Eva's mother give extra money if their children review English voluntarily. Leo's mother uses the negative example of herself and her husband to "nag" Leo.

Various other views about English teaching were expressed. Some parents think English teaching should focus on developing speaking ability first, not formal grammar or vocabulary, because it is primarily a communicative tool. In addition, Monica's father, Eva's mother and Barry's father suggest the teaching materials and teaching approaches should be lively in order to create as well as to maintain

children's interests. Barry's father believes cultural contents linked to home culture improve understanding and comprehension, so he buys Chinese stories in English to help Barry learn English better. Also, both Candy's mother and Danny's mother think English teaching should target individual needs and have differentiated classes to suit different learners, otherwise, the teaching will be difficult for teachers and pupils may also get bored in class. Furthermore, Eva's mother and Danny's mother think small classes are more effective and efficient for English teaching.

Tracy's mother, Monica's father, Eva's mother and Barry's father mention that the traditional teaching approach at school is boring and demotivates pupils. They think an interesting, interactive teaching style and authentic materials motivate pupils to learn and encourage them to speak English better. Their opinions are similar to Lee's finding (2008) that it was traditional lecturing style and uninteresting textbooks which deterred Taiwanese students from speaking English, not because they started learning English late in the past. Dixon (2009) also suggests that students who engage in age-appropriate games and read comprehensible books, rather than being lectured or drilled, learn a second language better in general. Many parents state they choose this language school because it has native-speaking teachers and their teaching styles are lively.

Taken together, the findings reported in this section provide answers to my second research question.

## **5.2 Discussion**

Curdt-Christiansen (2009) claims that family language ideology is context specific and influenced by macro- and micro-factors. She suggests that these factors are interrelated and may simultaneously have impacts on individuals' perceptions about language and language learning and their language intervention and practices. Although in the text of her paper she refers to these factors as being 'interrelated', she does not expand on this and her diagram depicts the two sets of factors as apparently acting independently (see Figure 1, above). My data indicate that Curdt-Christiansen's representation of these factors as being independent determining variables of language ideology is over simplistic; rather, there is a process of interaction between macro- and micro-factors, with the latter mediating responses to the former. This explains how parents in similar structural contexts arrive at different (although not entirely so) family language ideologies. In addition, these factors also clarify why family language policy is or is not consistent with the state policy in terms of what languages should be taught at kindergartens and in primary schools, what languages serve political interests and should be used as the medium of instruction or in public domains, and what languages provides access to communities, further study or advanced well-being.

In Taiwan, although the government has tried to revitalise minority languages and implement mother-tongue teaching, the medium of instruction at school and the official language is Mandarin. Teaching quality of mother-tongue is not satisfactory and many minority languages are still in danger of falling into disuse. English, in contrast, is banned in kindergartens and is not allowed to be taught in primary schools until the third grade in state schools; however, some local government schools start



teaching English in the first grade and many parents send their children to English immersion kindergartens.

In the previous section, I discuss parents' beliefs and rationalisation about language and language learning. In the next section, I will discuss macro- and micro-factors which influence their ideology formation and this discussion section will provide answers to my third and fourth research questions. The macro-factors identified in the study are similar to Curdt-Christiansen's, which are political, economic, socio-cultural and socio-linguistic. There are differences in identified micro-factors, however. Curdt-Christiansen lists home literacy environment, parents' expectations, parents' education and language experience and parental knowledge of bilingualism; my own research highlights home linguistic environment, parents' education and language experience, parents' SES background, parents' expectations and aspirations and ethnicity.

### **5.2.1 Macro-Factors**

LeVine and White (2003) claim in past decades that, owing to changing economic, demographic and structural conditions, Western parents pay more attention to child-raising and believe the allocation of greater resources to each child can enhance the future advantage of the child in an increasingly competitive environment. Such a trend has been observed in Taiwan as we have moved from being an agrarian to an industrial country. Changing ideological conditions motivated Taiwanese parents' willingness to commit material resources to each child. In addition, the bearing of fewer children in past decades and being influenced by Confucianism for thousands of years, providing good education (formal schooling and extracurricular

lessons) to children is widespread parental behaviour in Taiwan (Tsai, 2009). In my research, why parents send their children to learn English and how home language use is influenced can be attributed to four macro-factors: political, economic socio-cultural, and socio-linguistic.

### **5.2.1.1 Politics**

Taiwan has carried out a series of education reforms in the past two decades and English language policy has been changed several times. The ban on English teaching in kindergartens, the national commencement of English teaching in third grade but with leeway given to local schools and local governments, and the introduction of mother-tongue teaching in the first grade are the three language policies that have received a lot of attention in the media and everyday conversation, especially among parents at present. These policies also have a great impact on parents' behaviours towards the learning of English, Mandarin and minority languages in my study.

Schmidt (2006) claims that language policy gets into the political agenda when politicians sense something important is at stake, such as the status or the use of languages in the society and therefore intervention is needed. Referring to national language policy formation, Grin (2006) states that “language policy is an expression of a set of choices that society makes. As such, it remains an inherently political matter” (p.89). Grin seems to assume a particular relationship between government and society, probably a democracy. Historically, for many years, this was not the political relationship in Taiwan. Taiwan, which was colonised by the Japanese and then the KMT regime and is militarily threatened by Mainland China, has been in a politically unstable situation for decades (Huang, 2000). English and Mandarin have

been enjoying a prestigious status over other languages, which can be linked to unstable politic situation. The Mandarin-monolingual policy was not implemented to meet needs identified by the public but to meet a political need of the ruling group (the KMT); it serves as a political end. Mandarin, which was earlier only available to the educated elite, is now the medium of instruction and the means of access to education; it becomes a status symbol. Minority languages carried no value within schools and little value in the society in the past. The teaching of mother tongues was only initiated in 2001 after the DPP gained political power. English is seen as a language linked to outside world, and earlier was associated with the USA and its 'protective' role in Taiwan. These facts have been promoting the importance of learning English and swaying the language shift at home gradually among my cases.

Fishman (2006) claims that "Language authorities are normally linked to the political authorities of the communities upon whom the implementation of language policy ultimately depends" (p.311). In Taiwan, language shift at home originated from making Mandarin the medium of instruction and the only official language by the KMT. Ray's mother recognised it, but others do not seem to question the status of Mandarin at all since it has been the only official language since 1949. The political origin has been transformed into an issue of status and eventually as an accepted 'normality'. In other words, Mandarin has turned into the 'default' language and use of minority languages has declined: national policy gradually becomes a home policy. It is a commonly-found phenomenon in Minnan-speaking cases that parents code-switch Mandarin with Minnan and children predominantly use Mandarin only. For example, Eva's parents used to speak Minnan to Eva when she was young but after Eva began formal education, parents speak Minnan to each other and speak only Mandarin to Eva.

None of the parents in this study speak Hakfa to their children. Three interviewees, whose partners are Hakfa speakers, convey weak affiliation to learning Hakfa. Jean's mother thinks mother-tongue teaching is good, but Jean learns Minnan (not Hakfa) at school. The other two doubted the value of learning to speak Hakfa, noting the primacy of Minnan in Taichung (and across Taiwan in general) as the most widely spoken 'native' language. Echoing Oladejo's (2006) finding, my study shows that Hakfa-speaking parents switch to speaking Mandarin to their children and Minnan-speakers parents are in a conflict situation over whether to maintain Minnan or not. Such resistance to learning mother-tongues may result in what Chen (2006) describes as "a movement (mother-tongue education) intended to save a minority language may turn out to be a new form of oppression that threatens other minority languages" (p.329).

In contrast, although English teaching is banned in kindergartens, the majority of my interviewees send their children to learn English. In addition, a lot of parents complain about the inconsistency of English language policy across the country, which worries them and influences them to send their children to learn English outside of formal schooling. No parents disagreed with the policy which downgraded English teaching to third grade; yet most of them disagreed with the ban in kindergartens. The national policy seems to have no impact on the interviewees' decision, especially for the rich (as Leo's mother pointed out). The driving force behind it, as the majority of the interviewee commented, is strongly linked to its instrumental advantages, namely in education and the labour market.

### 5.2.1.2 Economy

Parents are willing to help equip their children with the skills they need to ensure they have optimum life chances (Argent, 2007) and achieving economic well-being is a commonly-found factor which influences my interviewees' language ideology. Parents want their children to take office or white-collar jobs instead of blue-collar or manual work. Taiwanese minority languages are community languages and speaking those only restricts people to local areas, while English is an international language and it opens up wider opportunities to people who speak it. All my interviewees see English as offering more educational opportunities and a better future to their children. In contrast, only Minnan-speaking parents regard their mother-tongue as an intergenerational communication tool and are willing to maintain it, while Hakfa-speaking parents dismiss the importance of maintaining Hakfa. The minority language speakers parents and those who are economically disadvantaged base their language ideology on the perceived demands of the labour market and the relative advantages offered by other languages. These circumstances urge the parents to downplay their mother-tongue.

A majority of interviewees regard the ban on English in kindergartens as denying children's access to valuable linguistic capital and therefore the prospect of educational and occupational advancement. By limiting pupils' access to English and promoting mother-tongue education, the policy is regarded as an unfair means of structuring inequality in education. Many parents, such as Leo's mother, Jean's mother, Eva's mother, and Ruby's mother, claim the ban only restricts children from economically-disadvantaged families for educational and professional advancement and exacerbates the 'Matthew Effect' (Lamb, 2008) in education. The term 'Matthew

Effect' is known as a shortened form of, "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer in economics" (*ibid*, p. 1). In the field of education, Lamb explains that the Matthew Effect can be applied to explain the interaction of three basic factors, educational background, learning practices and motivation; for example meaning that socioeconomic and ethnic groups that score somewhat higher than others in the early grades score much higher in the later grades; and the gap or cumulative advantage increases steadily with grade levels (*ibid*).

For most parents, competence in English is considered a form of capital to be used as a key that provides access to scarce resources. Therefore, parents from families with a diverse range of income all try their best to send children to English cram schools. Bourdieu (1982) explains that people buy language skills by learning the most prestigious forms and use those forms in the linguistic market to buy prestige and authority. He further posits that language shift is due to people's motivation to acquire and use a language that can bring them distinction, prestige and authority (cited in Chen, 2006). In this study, for upper-middle income families or above, a rationale for learning English is to provide their children with new experiences that broaden their perspectives and with an opportunity for global citizenship, like Ada's father and Candy's mother hoping their children will work or study abroad, or the American dream Monica's father wants her to seize.

In contrast, for middle and low income families, parents see the acquisition of English as a determinant of social mobility. For example, Ruby's mother sees learning English as opening a route to having an easy life. Leo's mother thinks that learning English well can help her son obtain higher education and then have a better life than she and her husband have experienced.

I believe that parental values are more constrained and influenced by economic factors when their children's future prosperity is the major concern. LeVine (2003) argues that insofar as the economic environment of working-class people is less promising and their resources scarcer, their child-rearing conceptions are more tightly dominated by considerations of the child's future economic well-being. In contrast, parents from high income families are relatively free to pursue different cultural or personal goals rather than simply material survival. Similarly, in my study it is understandable that the language ideology of parents from low income families is driven largely by economic factors as they have experience of economic insecurity; just as Edwards (2004) asserts that if young children and their parents recognise the economic significance of other languages, they are more likely to favour bilingualism.

### **5.2.1.3 Socio-cultural and Socio-linguistic Environment**

Because of the aforementioned factors, it has become a cultural phenomenon that a majority of pupils learn English outside formal schooling in Taiwan (Chao, 2004). In my study, a majority of parents state that it is a 'trend' to send children to learn English at cram schools. In some of my cases parents attribute children's low academic performance in English to not attending English cram school earlier. They worry about not sending children to English cram schools, rather than the quality of English teaching in formal schooling. For example, such a phenomenon has become an internalised ideology in Leo's mother's mind; she is shifting blame to herself. She states Leo's weak performance and lack of interest in English at school is not because of poor quality English teaching at school but because she did not send Leo to an English cram school earlier, which is also linked to their low income. It is more worrying that teachers, who are supposed to amend such a stereotype rooted in

parents' minds, have the same attitude as Leo's mother; for example, Ruby's teacher.

In other cases, parents do not deny the need for learning mother-tongue, indicating that mother-tongue education is 'great'. However, emphasizing English's instrumental importance as a tool for future study and employment, learning mother-tongues seems secondary to learning English. Because of socio-cultural changes, fewer people are speaking minority languages now. Some of the parents even do not mind exchanging mother-tongues for English. Kevin's mother further suggests making English a second language in Taiwan as a means to eliminate learning inequality.

Socio-cultural factors are inseparable from the socio-linguistic environment. Geolinguistic factors were also found to be influential among my cases in language use at home and parents' attitudes towards mother-tongue education in Taiwan. People tend to speak Mandarin in northern Taiwan and Minnan is more widely-spoken in daily conversation in Southern Taiwan. Grin and Korth (2005) refer to this phenomenon as a "language boundary" (p.69) and point out some minority languages have been 'saved' for centuries because the natural environment helps to maintain them. Generally speaking, no specific dominant community language is being spoken in Taichung; therefore, many minority-language speakers in my study have weak affiliation to their mother-tongue. Consequently, their children are affiliated weakly to mother-tongue and strongly to Mandarin.

Both Max's mother and Monica's mother mention their first language (Vietnamese and Hakfa) are not important in daily lives or in educational settings; therefore, they do not want to transmit the language to their children. Some families



even switched to a Mandarin-speaking-only home environment in their children's generation. For example, in Jean's family, although her father is a Hakfa speaker and her mother is a Minnan speaker, Mandarin is the dominant language at home.

In some cases, parents code switch mother-tongue with Mandarin or English. For example, Danny's family, whose parents are both Minnan speakers, speak dominantly Mandarin and sometimes English at home. Minnan is never used at home because it is not the community language in Taipei. Similarly, Ruby's parents, who are also Minnan speakers, use Mandarin and Minnan bilingually to children because they think it would be inconvenient if the children do not speak Minnan since they live in Chiayi (in southern Taiwan).

### **5.2.2 Micro-Factors**

Based on Curdt-Christiansen's (2009) model, both macro- and micro-factors are influential on parents' language ideology. In this study, however, the process of ideology formation is more complex than in Curdt-Christiansen's trilingual case study because her model is based in Québec, where Chinese is seen as heritage language in an immigrant society. This study, instead, involves more than three languages: English, Mandarin, Minnan and Hakfa (which can be seen as the only representative of other minority languages spoken in Taiwan). Unlike the model generated from Curdt-Christiansen's study, in which the macro- and micro-factors are independently influential, in this study the influences are interconnected. The interviewees do not act as free agents neither are their decisions structurally determined; instead, how individual interviewees respond to macro-factors personally influences the formation of their attitudes and construction of their behaviours towards English and

mother-tongues. And their personal attitudes and behaviours are influenced by different micro-factors. In other words, the parents' language ideology is influenced by micro-factors in reflexive response to macro-factors (Giddens, 2009). Giddens declares that "we have constantly to think about, or reflect upon, the circumstances in which we live our lives" (p.100). In other words, we do not have entirely free choices to select. Therefore, in my study, micro-factors do not stand separately from macro-factors and micro-factors sometimes interconnect with each other. Both macro- and micro-factors serve as visible as well as invisible indicators of what parents see as the role of different languages and how they are involved in their children's language education.

Curdt-Christiansen proposes four significant micro-factors, which are home literacy environment, parents' education and language experience, parents' expectations and parental knowledge of bilingualism. Yet, other noticeable factors are also found among my cases, which are parents' SES background, ethnicity, and parents' aspirations. All these factors are re-categorised into five micro-factors: home linguistic environment, parents' education and language experience, parents' SES background, parents' expectations and aspirations, and ethnicity. The next section analyses and explains these factors in more depth.

### **5.2.2.1 Home Linguistic Environment**

As mentioned earlier, how parents construct a home language environment for language learning is closely linked to their attitudes towards 'languages'. In addition to parents' attitudes, their language proficiency and language support from other family members are also essential in creating a language learning environment. In this

section, home language environment is used as a broad category for ‘parents’ language proficiency’ and ‘family support’ to examine the amount and nature of the linguistic input children can get from home. ‘Parent’s language proficiency’ refers to parents’ proficiency in Mandarin, their mother-tongue and English. ‘Family support’ refers to language (mother-tongue and English) support from other family members. I use the term ‘home linguistic environment’ instead of Curdt-Christiansen’s ‘home literacy environment’ because ‘literacy’ means ‘print/written’ in the narrow definition in linguistics. Schupbach (2009) defines ‘linguistic environment’ as “the quality and quantity of exposure to the community language” (p.16). Because Mandarin is the only Taiwanese language which has a written system, I decided to use ‘linguistic’ instead of ‘literacy’ in order not to cause any confusion.

Schupbach (2009) claims that mothers usually play an important role in children’s literacy and language development in western countries. Similarly, Li (2007) also finds that the mother’s human capital is an important factor that affects a home language and literacy environment in Chinese contexts. He suggests that mothers’ education level may restrict their involvement in language and literacy learning activities with their children at home. Mothers are usually the primary caregivers in western countries; therefore, the ‘mother’s tongue’ is usually transmitted through child-raising (Guardado, 2006). In Taiwan, mothers tend to give more nurturing care than fathers; therefore, ‘mother’s tongue’ should be transmitted, as in western countries. However, among five exogamous-couple cases, the mother’s tongue is maintained only in Tracy’s and Candy’s cases. Since Tracy’s mother is a Mandarin-speaker, strictly speaking, only one minority language is maintained out of four exogamous-couple families whose mother speaks a minority language. In other words, even these minority language-speaking mothers who are native speakers tend

not to transmit their mother-tongue to their children. Mothers are usually credited with having a critical role in passing on the L1 to children, as they have traditionally been the principle caregivers and also the ones who more commonly nurture children and socialise them into language use (Guardado, 2006). Stavans *et al* (2009) claim that the importance of L1 maintenance and L2 promotion is related to caregivers. It is not surprising to see that parents who speak Mandarin to their children at home subconsciously have transmitted Mandarin as their children's first language. Consequently, a language shift from Hakfa or Minnan to Mandarin is happening. This finding concurs with Wei's study (2006) that the majority of Hakka and aboriginal children turn out to be Mandarin speakers in the third- and later-generation after the installation of the KMT regime.

In the other two cases of the L1 (Minnan) maintenance parents in this study, it is the fathers and fathers' families who provide the necessary input for L1 maintenance. These two cases challenge traditional assumptions about gender roles in home language maintenance and perceived parenting notions in western countries (Guardado, 2006). One reason may be that Taiwan tends to be a patriarchal society (Hsu, 2008), so that the 'father's tongue' usually is the dominant language at home. Furthermore, families who live with grandparents (of the father's side in particular) are more likely to maintain L1 and balance Minnan-Mandarin usage than are nuclear families. As Paulston and Heidemann (2006) suggest, parents usually speak L1 to grandparents and L2 to children. In Max's case, where the grandparents live with the family, Minnan (L1) has remained the dominant language.

In addition, both Tracy's mother and Jean's mother recognise the importance of a native-speaking environment. But Jean's mother thinks Jean does not need to learn

Minnan formally because she can always pick up Minnan as she grows up. Furthermore, she is afraid that learning Minnan and English at the same time will interfere with Jean's Mandarin development, so she would rather Jean learn English at the cost of mother-tongue maintenance. However, Tracy's mother thinks it is more practical to learn Minnan or even another minority languages rather than English, since there is no environment for English learning<sup>26</sup>.

Among all the cases, no parent consider himself/herself as a fluent English speaker, yet they all try to create an additional English-learning environment outside school- that is, sending the children to this English language school. In some other cases, parents hire private tutors or teach children English by themselves to complement their schooling. Candy's mother seeks help from relatives who live in Canada to create an English-speaking environment in daily life. Tracy's mother encourages all the children to practice English to an English-native-speaking Filipina maid at home. Although the government bans English teaching in kindergartens and the first two years in primary schools and encourages mother-tongue education, parents seem to endeavour harder to create an English-speaking environment than a Minnan /or Hakfa-speaking environment for their children. The extreme case is that some Minnan or Hakka parents end up stopping speaking their mother-tongue to their children in order not to interfere with the children's schooling in Mandarin or English learning. The results indicate that although the Taiwanese government is trying to revitalise minority languages and postpone English teaching, it is the family which determines minority language maintenance and English learning behaviours. DeCapua and Wintergerst (2009) state that regardless of official policies, home

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<sup>26</sup> Note that Tracy's mother does not dismiss the importance of English learning. She is referring to the practicability of learning minority languages and English in Taiwan in terms of native speakers and a native-speaking environment.

environment and language habits are the most significant influences for maintaining minority languages through generations.

#### **5.2.2.2 Parents' Education and Language Experience**

Schupbach (2009) suggests that parents' attitudes decide whether they wish to maintain a language or not, but that it is other factors, such as the educational level of parents and their socioeconomic status, which contribute more to the success or failure of language maintenance. In my study, parents' education and language experience or competence in Mandarin, minority languages and English also influence their ideologies of language and language learning and then have an impact on language management and practice at home.

Since families in Taiwan nowadays tend to have fewer children than previously (Tsai, 2009), more attention tends to be focused on each individual child. In this study, many parents follow experts' or other people's advice to raise their children. Candy's mother stated that she carefully followed books and the methods experts suggest to help Candy learn English. She wants Candy to be English-Mandarin bilingual so that she can enjoy the associated advantages. Li and Rao (2000) claim that children whose parents followed specific teaching approaches while they were young tend to outperform the children of parents who did not do so. Other parents, like Ruby's mother, Max's father and Vera's father, follow friends' advice to assist their children's English learning.

Jao and McKeever (2006) find that in Taiwan elites are heavily involved in and good at educating their children. From my cases, I find that parents who have higher

education tend to have their own beliefs or attitudes towards language learning and participate more in children's English learning, while those who do not have a college or university education tend to follow their friends' advice or hearsay knowledge about English teaching. For example, Barry's mother volunteers to teach English in his primary school. Monica's father and Eva's mother sit in the class with their children and help them review English at home. On the other hand, Max's mother, Leo's mother, Ruby's mother, Jean's mother and Ray's mother cannot provide any assistance in English learning at home. This finding is similar to Li's study (2007) that 'academic parents' with higher levels of educational attainment are able to provide quality support for and involvement in their children's English learning with academic guidance and interactions; in contrast, parents with more limited educational background are restricted in their involvement in language and literacy learning activities with their children at home.

Echoing a Confucian tradition, Chinese parents tend to believe education is the best way to change their social status and it is parents' responsibility to take children's education seriously (Li & Rao, 2000). Taiwanese parents are no exception in this regard. As Oladejo (2006) notes, Taiwanese parents place great emphasis on education and believe in the Confucian principle of "a learned man is a good man" (p.154). The majority of Taiwanese parents believe that every child can succeed if they work hard and put sufficient effort (*ibid*). In Taiwan, it has become a social phenomenon that parents often compel their children to work hard or send them to 'cram schools' to study more in order to ensure the success of their children, particularly in such a competitive educational environment (*ibid*). Unlike the American ideology of education, which believes that one can recreate oneself at any time in the life course and become a self-made person (LeVine & White, 2003), there are few opportunities

to change paths or ‘retool’ after formal schooling age in Taiwan. Taiwanese parents believe that education should be completed by a certain age and it is their responsibility to ensure that is the case. Therefore, an overwhelming number of parents regard ‘cram schools’ as a ‘panacea’ for their children’s educational success. In my study, no matter what educational background parents have, they all hope their children can learn English well. For example, Ruby’s father and Leo’s father are working class, the mothers both state they want their children to learn English well in order to access higher education and better job opportunities.

Ferlazzo (2009) suggests that parental involvement is influential on children’s academic performance. Studies have shown that any kind of parent action to participate in their child’s education is beneficial. Argent (2007) suggests that parental involvement in children’s academic study is believed to promote positive behaviours towards and academic attainment of children. Needless to say, parental involvement includes several behaviours, such as encouraging children, attending school activities, assisting with homework, or frequent contact between families and schools (Wei & Zhou, 2003). In my study, only a few fathers participate in their children’s English learning; in particular those who have a higher education background tend to involve themselves more in their children’s English learning, like Ada’s father, Monica’s father and Barry’s father. Jao and McKeever (2006) point out that children whose fathers have higher levels of education are still getting more education than those from working-class and farming backgrounds even after several education reform policies which were intended to reduce social inequality in present-day Taiwan.



### 5.2.2.3 Parents' SES Background<sup>27</sup>

In the previous section, both the research literature and my own cases suggest that parents' educational background is influential in the formation of language ideology. Parents' SES background, however, is significant in shaping their ideologies of language and language learning too. Parents from low- or middle-income families tend to see language as an instrumental tool while upper-middle or high income families tend to see language as a communication tool. Among the latter, for example, Ruby's mother and Danny's mother think language is primarily a tool for everyday communication with people; Tracy's mother thinks language can be used to appreciate other cultures; Vera's father and Ray's father think language and cultural identity are inseparable. In contrast, among lower SES parents, for example, Leo's mother and Eva's mother think English plays an important role in educational attainment and social stratification; Mandarin is made the only language spoken in Jean's family because it is the medium of instruction in school. In addition, parents from higher SES backgrounds are more willing to maintain minority languages. Other parents care more about whether their children can fit into the majority-group community or have more job opportunities but at the cost of losing their mother-tongue. Guardado (2006) also finds that the families in his study that had succeeded in L1 maintenance also seemed to enjoyed a higher socioeconomic status and higher formal educational background.

My study also concurs with Li's (2004) theory that parental human capital, especially that of mothers, is an important factor that influences a home language and literacy environment. My findings suggest that mothers from different SES families or

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<sup>27</sup> See Section 3.3.1 for information on the SES of parents in this study.

with different educational background are involved differently in their children's English learning. Mothers who have a higher educational background tend to invest more in creating an English-literacy environment for their children, such as by buying English books. Candy's mother and Barry's mother read English books to their children while they were young and still study with them now. Both of them demonstrate what Peterson and Heywood (2007) call a "high level of social capital in establishing routines involving reading in English at home" (p.527).

Although none of the parents state they are 'fluent' in English, their SES backgrounds influence their investment in their children's learning and prescribe different English-learning environments at home. Li (2007) claims that parental human capital is an important factor in shaping children's home learning experiences. In terms of cultural and social capital, the middle class families have more social connections than the working class families to support their children's English learning, which is consistent with Reimers's conclusion (2000) that "poor parents have fewer resources to support the education of their children, and they have less financial, cultural, and social capital to transmit" (p.55). For instance, Candy's mother can seek help from relatives living in Canada, Ray's elder sister is living in America and Danny's mother hires a private tutor to help him with the language school's homework. They do not want their children simply to learn English, they want them to learn it well in order to maintain positional advantage. These parents are looking for "reputational capital" (Brown & Scase, 1997, cited in Lowe, 2000, p. 365) which can distinguish their children from their rival counterparts. Without doubt, parental choice and support are much wider for those families with an income considerably above the average (MacKenzie *et al*, 2003).

In contrast, Leo's mother and Max's mother state they have neither time nor competence to help their children learn English. Peterson and Heywood (2007) explain that parents' support for their children's education depends on parents' time, ability, and education level and usually lower-class parents are busy working and they do not know so much about education, so they cannot get involved. Portes (2000) notes that social capital can seldom be acquired without investing some material resources or possessing cultural knowledge, because these enable one to interact with others. Hung (2007) indicates that the 2002 Education Reform encourages schools to involve parents more intimately in shared responsibilities. Yet in my study, only Barry's mother volunteers to teach English at school because she has the English capability as well as time. LeVine and White ((2003) suggest that economic investment and parental commitment operate collaboratively to foster children's academic potential through formal schooling. I find that all the parents in the study are willing to provide and invest in the best possible resources to promote the academic achievement of their children. Leo's mother who does not have the same level of income as most of the others even blames herself for not providing enough resources.

Parents from higher SES background (Candy's mother, Ada's father, Vera's father and Monica's father) value English proficiency highly and set more specific targets for their children to achieve. They see English capability as the chief means for obtaining social and economic mobility and security for their children. They believe English gives access to more education and career opportunities, which may be transformed into economic and social status. Their belief is similar to He's (2009) finding that English has accrued a value of symbolic capital and has begun to serve as an indicator for stratification among people in China. Parents of lower SES, too, see

English leading to social mobility but do not have the material and cultural resources to act on this.

Parents from different SES backgrounds also have different attitudes towards the ‘Matthew Effect’<sup>28</sup> in education in Taiwan in which English competence is included. Leo’s mother thinks English is a commodity that only the rich can buy; she accepts the circumstance and blames herself for not providing Leo with enough support. Eva’s mother accepts inequality exists in the society, whereas Kevin’s mother and Danny’s mother claim the government should avert the phenomenon by making English the second language.

In addition, parents’ SES background is also critical in language management and practice. Among my cases, although all children are learning English in language schools, parents with higher SES background, like Danny’s mother and Candy’s mother, who cannot provide any assistance in English learning at home, can afford to hire an additional private English tutor to help them. Most parents realise that English language ability and tertiary-education credentials are positional goods, yet only parents from higher SES families can actually get involved and help their children to obtain them. My study shows that parents with higher SES perceive the importance of English in more specific terms and can involve themselves in their children’s English learning in terms of their own time and knowledge. Family income, however, is also influential because it can help parents buy books or extra lessons to supplement knowledge they do not have. As a result, income inequality is reflected in children’s English learning. It is becoming increasingly obvious that the ban on English in kindergartens has had the impact of giving wealthy families an advantage since they

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<sup>28</sup> See Section 5.2.1.2 for more discussion.

can buy access to private lessons, while restricting poor families in their access to educational resources. Therefore, Leo's mother and Kevin's mother think English should be taught in Grade 1 in order to eliminate inequality of opportunity in English learning caused by family income differences. Lamb (2008) suggests that if the Matthew Effect is happening, it is more effective to intervene earlier than trying later.

#### **5.2.2.4 Parents' Expectations and Aspirations**

Although parents value educational success highly, this does not necessarily entail equal expectations of their children's performance. Li (2007) suggests that parents from different SES backgrounds and with different education levels may have different expectations and aspirations for their children. He believes that 'academic parents' tend to set higher expectations for educational attainment and provide more verbal encouragement for their children. Similarly, Hung (2007) states that higher SES families provide higher levels of "psychological support" (p.124) for their children to continue in education and children's academic achievement is linked to parents' aspirations and involvement at home. In my sample, for instance, Candy's mother sets high expectations for her to achieve; Tracy's mother, Kevin's mother and Barry's father often encourage their children verbally. Danny's mother, Ray's mother, Kevin's mother and Jean's mother motivate their children by taking them abroad or giving material rewards. These cases suggest that social, cultural and economic capital play important and inter-related roles in facilitating and sustaining their children's continuous English learning and their motivation to learn English. Leo's mother points out that once you have English earlier, you are in a position to make rapid progress; if you do not, you may quickly get left behind and feel demotivated, just like Leo.

Oladejo (2006) finds that Taiwanese parents who have high expectations of their children tend to involve themselves more in their children's education. More generally, Bekerman and Tatar (2009) claim that the main objective of parental involvement in and choice of schools appears to be the desire to make a difference to their children's educational outcomes. This is most obvious in the planning of English learning among my cases. I find that parents choose the schools to fulfil their educational expectations toward their children. No parents claimed to make any such effort in maintaining heritage languages.

Glodenberg (2006) finds that a majority of parents think that having a good education helps children to get ahead. This sentiment was experienced generally by parents in my study. Of particular interest are Ruby's mother and Leo's mother, who state clearly that they do not want their children to end up like them, without a good education or a good job due to the lack of English.

Lamb (2008) claims that parents' expectations are deeply influenced by sociocultural factors in the local community. In this study, parents from a comparatively low SES background set vague expectations for their children and cannot specify reasons why English learning is important. Max's mother, Leo's mother and Ruby's mother get their anxiety for their children to English learning from peer competition and social pressure and they do not have specific expectations for their children. Leo's mother observes that only the rich have access to supplementary English classes. Leo's family is not rich, but the opportunity of a free place at this language school is seized eagerly because Leo's mother believes a knowledge of English will increase his future life chances. Max's mother sends him to the language school because her neighbour does too. Initially, Ruby's mother did not plan to send

Ruby to learn English so early. Although they all made the decision themselves, it was in response to perceived social pressure. Piller (2005) claims that parents' main concerns are to fit their children into their peer group and the welfare of their children. In contrast, parents from higher SES backgrounds tend to set clear expectations for their children's English learning. Candy's mother wants her to develop native-like English competence. Vera's father hopes she can pass the GEPT. Ada's father desires her to be fluent in English in order to obtain professional jobs. These rich parents tend to believe that the approach to English learning is "the earlier the better" and are prone to support English learning as early as possible and require or motivate their children to make an effort to learn it.

#### **5.2.2.5 Ethnicity**

DeCapua and Wintergerst (2009) believe language choice and use at home reflect acceptance or rejection of the parents' ethnic identities. Among the minority-language-speaking parents, Hakka people seem to have weaker affiliation to their mother-tongue, compared to Minnan-speaking parents. Monica's father even wants her to learn Minnan instead of Hakfa because he thinks it is more practical for the labour market. The more people use it, the more valuable it becomes because it is a tool for communication with the majority people who already use it (Grin, 2006).

On the other hand, almost all Minnan-speaking parents have positive attitudes towards mother-tongue education. Since around 70% of the population speaks Minnan (Oladejo, 2006), it seems unsurprising that Minnan-speaking parents are more willing to maintain their mother-tongue than Hakfa-speaking parents. Paulston and Heidemann (2006) find that a minority group which enjoys political or economic

dominance will be happy to see its linguistic position being maintained. Complete language shift from Minnan to Mandarin, however, happened in Jean, Eva and Danny's families; Ray's mother is not keen to transmit Minnan either, because Minnan is less prestigious compared to Mandarin at the state level.

Apart from the number of speakers, many other social factors, such as social stratification, values, economic change, or trends of cultural pluralism and cultural assimilation also contribute to different attitudes towards minority languages and the likelihood of L1 maintenance among different ethnic groups. In Taiwan the situation is complicated by the presence of an exogenous language (Mandarin) that was imposed but then gained acceptance and status. Attitudes to Mandarin may be as influential for the maintenance of minority languages as attitudes to these languages are. In the past, indigenous Taiwanese people were poorer than the Mainlanders; therefore, they could not afford secondary education<sup>29</sup>. Although Mandarin was the only official language at that time, many people did not speak Mandarin fluently; only rich indigenous Taiwanese people could formally learn Mandarin. In addition, Mandarin was the only language allowed to be spoken in the public sector and in school; as a result, those who spoke Mandarin fluently and accentlessly were regarded as being of higher status or richer at that time. After the 1980s, the society and economy changed rapidly, education was not the privilege of the rich anymore; therefore, almost everyone began to speak Mandarin from then on. Tracy's mother (a Mainlander) and Kevin's mother (a Minnan-speaker) value mother-tongue education highly as a way to maintain indigenous cultures and communicate with other people; Ada's father (a Mainlander), in contrast, thinks mother-tongue education is not

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<sup>29</sup> Compulsory education was extended to nine years in 1968. Before then, only primary schooling was compulsory. However, between 1949 to 1968, it was estimated only 70% of the population at most received primary education.



important at all and everyone on the island should learn English in order to reach out to the world. Oladejo (2006) finds, however, that even today it is not unusual to hear negative comments implying that speaking Minnan is a marker of low educational attainment; this is similar to Ray's mother's statement that speaking Mandarin makes one look more educated. It seems clear that the importance of Mandarin is a crucial factor in the decline of minority languages.

Bourdieu (2002) claims the least advantaged classes are those least inclined and least able to accept and adopt the language of the school and will be condemned in the scholastic market. In the past, ethnic inequality in education and the white-collar labour market in Taiwan was reproduced across generations due to the lack of Mandarin competence (Jao & McKeever, 2006). With the use of Mandarin now almost universal, the linguistic marker of educational distinction has become English. In other words, English becomes an implicit tool of inclusion and exclusion. It is understandable therefore why almost all parents are very eager for their children to learn English and many of them hold *laissez-faire* attitudes towards mother-tongue education. Some parents even give up speaking mother-tongue at home for the sake of a better future to their children. The situation is similar to the minority groups in America in Edwards' (2004) study. He claims that since English is the language of power and education in the USA, it requires particular commitment for parents to maintain mother-tongue at home.

Based on Batibo's (2005) five phases of a language shift at home<sup>30</sup>, Hakfa is on its way to extinction while Minnan is less threatened in my study. This finding concurs with Jao and McKeever's (2006) study, which found that the Hakka were

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<sup>30</sup> See section 2.2.1 for more details

more likely to change their mother-tongue and spoke Mandarin more fluently than the Minnan, a strategy which offered benefits in the labour market and might also help them access higher education. They also found in past decades, public-sector employment was heavily influenced by ethnicity in Taiwan. For example, Mainlanders dominated careers in education and the public sector, whereas other Taiwanese were much more likely to pursue jobs in small business, low-paid work and farming. Income levels were also linked to ethnicity. Some minority-language-speaking parents worked in low-paying and low-status jobs (Max's parents and Leo's parents in my study), or with family-unfriendly hours (Ruby's parents) and as a result they were less able to support their children's English learning.

Another reason why minority-language parents are not enthusiastic in maintaining their mother-tongue may be that minority languages are spoken languages and they do not have written systems, while Mandarin is a rigid, standardised written language (Li & Rao, 2000). Written Mandarin characters are difficult to learn; each spoken word or syllable is represented by an individual character so that learning to read and write in Chinese means mastery of thousands of individual symbols. It takes time and effort to recognise, memorise and write characters (*ibid*). Minority-language parents do not want their children to enter schools without competence in Mandarin and consequently fall behind their counterparts. Ada's father, as a Mainlander, thinks knowing Mandarin is enough for life on the island and knowing English enables one to reach out to the globalised world. This is similar to Cabau's study (2009) in which she finds that her cases think knowledge and competence in the language(s) used in the classroom and future professional lives is enough. Jean's mother states that she does not want learning their

mother-tongue to deter Jean's language development and educational performance, so only Mandarin is used at home.

Ethnicity alone is not the only factor contributing to attitudes towards Minnan. Ada's father, Tracy's mother and Monica's father are all Mainlanders; however, their opinion/view of 'other languages' is influenced by their own experience and linguistic/communicative capabilities. Ada's parents are both Mainlanders and have limited ability in Minnan, it is convenient for them to see Minnan as unimportant. They see English as meeting an external need, which is to broaden Ada's worldview and life. Monica's parents, however (Father is a Mainlander and Mother is a Hakka), have more positive attitudes towards Minnan than Ada's parents do. Both Monica's parents speak Minnan and they would rather Monica learn Minnan instead of Hakfa because of its wider use. They see a knowledge of Minnan as extending Monica's job opportunities, while Ada's parents see it as constraining her to the island only, not giving access to the outside world. Both of Monica's parents need to speak Minnan at work from time to time, while Ada's father needs to use English occasionally when he goes abroad on business. Tracy's mother is a Mainlander, who also speaks good Minnan, and Father is a Minnan speaker. They think Minnan is as important as English because they are both tools to communicate with others, arguing that the more languages children speak, the more people they are able to communicate with. Tracy's mother draws the balance between the two languages from her own learning experience. She has been learning English for more than twenty years and she is still afraid to speak it in public; she learned Minnan after she married Tracy's father and she thinks she is a competent Minnan-speaker now because of a native-speaking environment. In short, their personal lives and language experiences, in addition to ethnicity, are reflected in their views of various languages.

### **5.3 Language Management**

Spolsky (2004) identifies three elements which determine language use in a speech community: the community's frequent patterns of language practices, the beliefs or ideologies about language use and specific efforts to influence language intervention, planning or management. He suggests that language policy interacts with non-linguistic factors, such as the "political, demographic, social, religious, cultural, psychological, bureaucratic and so on" (p.6), in a complex and dynamic way. In this section, I discuss how parents manage their children's language learning with regard to mother-tongue and English. Language practice, however, is not the main focus of this thesis and will not be explored in depth.

Schupbach (2009) claims parents' attitudes towards the language itself, towards its transmission and maintenance and towards bilingualism shape language management and practices in the family. In this study, language deficiencies in minority languages of the children are associated with parents' language ideology influenced by macro- and micro-factors. Parents who do not see the importance of minority language tend not to maintain the language or assist their children's mother-tongue education. Parents who see the importance of mother-tongue education, on the other hand, do not try hard to transmit the language either. The common strategies these families apply are to talk to their children in their mother-tongue or to encourage their children to talk to people from older generations. No other effort was made compared to English learning. Consequently, the typical immigrant pattern of language shift (Canagarajah, 2008) that spans three generations, parents migrating as monolingual L1 speakers, children becoming bilingual speakers and grandchildren shifting to monolingual L2 speakers, appears to be happening in a non-immigrant

community in Taiwan, but with the added complication of English appearing as an additional language for the later generation.

On the other hand, although English is banned in kindergartens and is not taught until Grade 3, English learning is still an important investment among these parents in comparison to mother-tongue education. It is the interest and determination of parents that influence their language management, rather than national policies. These parents recognise that English is an international language and hope English will open the door to a better education and more job opportunities for their children. Choosing an English school for their children is a common strategy shared by these parents. How parents manage English learning and practice for their children can be categorised into four aspects: formal schooling, extra-curricular lessons or cram schools, daily assistance and other.

### **5.3.1 Formal Schooling**

Similar to the observation of increasing social class inequalities in privatised educational provision and attainment in the USA (Wu, 2008), a series of education reforms and language policies in Taiwan have directed parental involvement from meritocratic competition to a largely privatised competition between families based in some measure on wealth. Attending private kindergartens or schools and famous, expensive cram schools are two examples. These behaviours are similar to those of parents in Salami's (2008) study in which parents believe "English proficiency in and of itself will lead to children's economic and social betterment" (p.96). Some critics of such developments worried that "educational opportunities will become polarised, just as incomes have been polarised" (Lauder & Hughes, 1999, p.31). This is also

found in my study. For instance, some parents, especially from higher SES backgrounds, send their children to private English-immersion kindergartens where the medium of instruction is entirely in English; others send their children to half-day English kindergartens. The reason is the belief that the earlier a child begins learning in English the higher the chances of mastering the language and this will eventually guarantee good performance in later education and a good job in the future. Furthermore, Candy's mother, Ray's mother and Tracy's mother also send their children to private secondary schools in order to receive better English teaching. This is similar to what Song (2010) found is a trend in Korea, that middle-class parents aim to nurture Korean-English bilingual children and foster 'elite bilingualism'.

### **5.3.2 Cram Schools and Extra-curricular Lessons**

In addition to sending their children to private kindergartens and secondary schools, these parents also look for supplementary classes outside formal schooling. All parents send their children to an English language school, and some children receive other forms of tuition. Because of credential inflation in tertiary degrees in Taiwan (Hwang, 2008), more and more parents want their children to study at good universities. Demand for places exceeds supply, so the use of credentials as a screening-device is inevitable. Therefore, the elite universities have raised the threshold requirement from taking only exams to the additional demand of certificates such as the GEPT. Sending children to learn English earlier is therefore a backwash effect from the competition for access to elite universities. Many interviewees refer to 'getting ahead of' or avoiding 'falling behind' counterparts as a key reason sending their children to learn English. Educational success is seen by these parents as ensuring the reproduction of prosperous lives for their children. The family income

does not directly determine whether a child will be sent to a language school or not. Sending children to a language school is more like an “intention-filled investment” to these parents (Liang *et al*, 2000, p. 362). It is interesting to note that fathers play an important role in choosing the language school in my study, which seems to contrast with the traditional notion in Taiwan that the mother plays the key role in supporting her children’s education. Max’s father insists on sending Max to the language school even though he himself does not speak English; Ada’s father, Vera’s father and Monica’s father choose the language school on the basis of the teaching methods and materials. Wu (2008) explains that in Chinese societies, a father’s role is as active as, if not more active than, that of the mother in selecting schools for their children because they tend to be patriarchal societies; choosing a school is an exercise of power, whereas supporting the child’s education more directly may be seen as a ‘nurturative’ role.

Before coming to this English language school, Kevin and Ada had attended ‘cram schools’. Their parents transferred them to this language school because they did not like the traditional teaching methods. Monica and Vera attended other day-care schools which teach English too. They came to this language school because their parents want them to learn English from native speakers. Both Candy’s mother and Danny’s mother hire a private English tutor to help them with English homework in addition to sending them to the language school. Both of them think they are not competent enough to help their children with English homework, so they hire someone else for the job.

In addition, Tracy’s mother thinks attending English language school in native-speaking countries is also a good way to practice English as well as to

understand the culture. She sent Tracy's elder sister to Australia two years ago and she thinks it is effective, but Tracy refused to go so she did not force her to go.

### **5.3.3 Daily Assistance**

Research findings demonstrate that parental involvement in their children's academic development can critically enhance their performance (Senechal & LeFevre, 2002). Hung (2007) believes that parents with relatively higher levels of educational attainment are more likely to provide quality support for and involvement with their children through basic academic guidance and verbal interactions in the learning of English. In my study, they are even better at applying different strategies to encourage or maintain their children's interest in learning English.

In Taiwan, the MOE has been encouraging parents to participate in children's education since the 2002 Education Reform. More and more parents get involved in school activities as well as their children's learning at home. In my study, for example, Barry's mother volunteers to teach English in his primary school. Furthermore, this language school encourages parents to sit in every lesson to learn with their children because the director believes that parental involvement is important in helping the children learn English. Parents who choose this language school tend to get involved in their children's English learning, which contrasts with the traditional belief that teaching English is the responsibility of teachers (Chen, 2003). Henderson and Berla (1994) believe pupils' performance improves when parents play four key roles in their children's learning: teachers, supporters, advocates, and decision-makers. All parents in my study can be seen as supporters because they try to create a home environment that promotes English learning, such as buying English books, magazines, CDs and



DVDs. Some parents act as teachers: Eva's mother and Monica's father help review what is taught at primary school and cram schools. Candy's mother reads English stories to her every day before bed. In addition, Barry's mother can be seen as a supporter because she contributes her English capability and provides extra support to other pupils. Baker and Stevenson (1986) consider four aspects of parental involvement: knowledge of child's schooling, contact with school, homework strategies, and general academic strategies (cited in Kelly, 2001, p. 7). In this study, Ruby's mother and Barry's mother stated regular contact with their children's home-room teacher. Vera's father, Eva's mother and Ada's father help their children do homework every day. Monica's father, Kevin's mother and Barry's parents help with their children only if the children ask them questions; they do not get much involved in their children's homework writing.

Wei and Zhou (2003) point out that high motivation encourages learners to interact with native speakers of the language he/she is studying and usually results in greater success in language learning. They also suggest that with parents' support and encouragement, plus children's high motivation, children can make significant progress in English learning. Parents in my study may or may not have come across such literature, but most of them recognise the importance of motivation. Most parents set targets for their children to achieve, such as hours or units they have to review every day; some parents give rewards to motivate their children if they achieve, whereas others control hours of television viewing or computer/video playing if they do not study as their parents demand. For example, Jean's mother and Eva's mother will give extra pocket money if they study English every day. Monica's father, Ray's mother, Candy's mother and Ada's father take them to watch English cartoons or movies to spur their interest in learning English. Kevin's mother, Ruby's mother and

Danny's mother promise to take them to Disneyland in America one day if they learn English well.

Gardner and Lambert (1972) propose two forms of motivation to learn a language well: 1) integrative motivation -- the desire to become part of another group; and 2) instrumental motivation—the desire to learn a language for personal success (cited in Chen, 2006). Candy's mother and Monica's father employ the former to encourage their children, while Ada's father adopts the latter. Barry's mother and Vera's father encourage their children verbally in order to maintain their interests and confidence in English learning. Leo's mother, in contrast, 'nags' Leo by using the examples of herself and her husband and hopes it might motivate Leo in some way. Leo's family also simply do not possess the resources to emulate some motivational strategies of the more well-off families.

In addition to personal support parents provide to their children, I find some parents choose this language school as a strategy to promote English learning. They believe a teacher's teaching methods can motivate or demotivate children. Dixon (2009) claims that teaching methods are more important than materials because lively and interesting teaching styles and good student-teacher interactions can promote effective English learning. Both Eva's mother and Barry's father mention that primary schools still use traditional methods of English teaching and the curriculum is too test-oriented. Tracy's mother and Monica's father choose this language school because the teaching style is lively and interesting. Kevin and Vera were transferred to this language school because their previous language schools adopted traditional teaching approaches and focused too much on recitation, memorisation and tests. Barry's father, Ray's mother, Eva's mother and Candy's mother chose the school

because it has native-speaking teachers. Tracy's mother and Barry's father suggest that when teaching English, the emphasis should be put on successful communication, fluency and actual use, not on accuracy or grammar.

#### **5.3.4 Others**

In addition to parental involvement in formal schooling, extra-curricular lessons and personal support, other strategies of language management and practices are found in the study. Tracy's, Candy's and Ray's families travel abroad every summer. Their parents use travelling as a strategy for them to practice English. Eva's mother and Barry's father took their children abroad last year and found that their child's English actually improved a lot after travelling.

Furthermore, Tracy's mother hires a Filipina maid not only to help her with the housework but also to help her children exercise English in daily life. Candy's mother asks her to talk to her cousins who live in Canada in English to improve her fluency. Ray's mother also encourages him to write letters or emails in English to his elder sister who is studying in America.

In the final chapter I shall draw together the diverse observation and conclusions from this chapter into a broader theme and model.

## **Chapter 6 – Conclusions**

The complexity and fluidity of the Taiwanese language situation and the rapid social, political and economic changes that are taking place in the community makes this study particularly valuable in enhancing the understanding of how personal language ideologies evolve. The radical language shift in families and language policies at the state level, as discussed above, lead to a demand for understanding parental behaviours and their underlying influential factors. I, as an insider of the Taiwanese community, explored the complex formation of family language ideology through parents' eyes, which is the novelty of this study.

How parents construct their behaviours towards their children's language education is complicated and difficult to predict because it depends so much on individual circumstances. The purpose of this study, however, is not to predict but to explain. This is particularly complex in the Taiwanese context, where Mandarin is the official language and medium of instruction, Minnan the most widely-spoken community language, English a prestigious language in education and labour market and other minority languages continue - for the present at least - to be used within their respective communities. This study reveals that some parents think that early exposure to both mother-tongue and Mandarin results in confusion and interference between the two languages, while some are plagued with doubt and some are over-confident with regard to English learning. Mandarin and English seem to play a decisive role in gate-keeping linguistic capital in parents' minds in my study. Minnan is retained because it is used in the wider community and Hakfa (which represents other minority languages here) is experiencing decline and the possible threat of

future extinction.

Jao and McKeever (2006) found that a language shift at family level has happened in Taiwan over the past sixty years, compared with the hundreds of years it commonly took to happen in other countries (Edwards, 2004). My study concurred with their finding that some families are experiencing language shift while others have experienced it already. In my study, the reason why language shift or language maintenance is variously taking place in families can be attributed to the functions/roles these parents perceive for particular languages. Their perceptions of different languages influence their language use at home and in life, which answers my first research question<sup>31</sup>.

My purpose in carrying out this study, however, was not to examine Jao and McKeever's study, but to explore the driving force, in the form of parents' language ideology, behind the language shift. The study has shown a number of interesting outcomes. *First*, the study analysed the parents' understanding and 'theories' of language and language learning, expectations about their children's learning of both mother-tongue and English and explained how these ideologies influenced their behaviour in relation to their children's language education. Various ideologies of language and language learning (in respect to Mandarin, Minnan and English) are identified<sup>32</sup> and respond to my second research question. *Second*, both macro- and micro-factors were influential in the formation of each parent's language ideology and its influences on home language management and practice. The macro-factors were the causes identified by the parents under the local, national and global

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<sup>31</sup> See Section 5.1.1 for more discussion about how parents perceive the roles of different languages.

<sup>32</sup> See Section 5.1.2 for more discussion about parental ideologies of language and language learning in respect to different languages.

sociolinguistic environments, government policies and economic factors, notably the labour market. In other words, macro-factors were structural influences on parents. On the other hand, micro-factors which were found in individual parents, including their SES background, education and language experience, home literacy environment, expectation and ethnicity, also influenced the formation of the family language ideology. This outcome provides a response to my third and fourth research questions. *Third*, this study explored the interrelationships between the various factors and found they were interwoven and interconnected, rather than being as simple as Curdt-Christiansen's model suggests with macro- and micro-factors seemingly acting independently on family language ideology.

The study also illustrated the linkages between official language and language education policy and individual families' language perceptions, choices and use. I found how the ways in which language education policies were received, interpreted, accepted or subverted at family level depend on factors such as political orientation, language mixes within families and across generations, perceptions of language roles and family members' understanding of their relationships with various local communities.

In this study, I used Curdt-Christiansen's family language policy model as a starting point for exploring parents' language ideologies about Mandarin, mother-tongues and English and my findings lead me to replace this model with one which recognises the complex interaction between macro- and micro-factors, or structural forces and individual agencies. This in turn demands a theoretical position to explain the mutual interaction between social and cultural structures and individual powers of agency. These parents are influenced by similar social contexts yet behave

differently with respect to their children's language learning and have diverse ideologies of language and language learning. The re-modelling of the factors influencing family language ideology and practice explicitly brings in issues around the relationship between structural factors and individual/family agency and choice.

The following model is derived from the findings to illustrate the process of parental language ideology formation and its impact on language management.

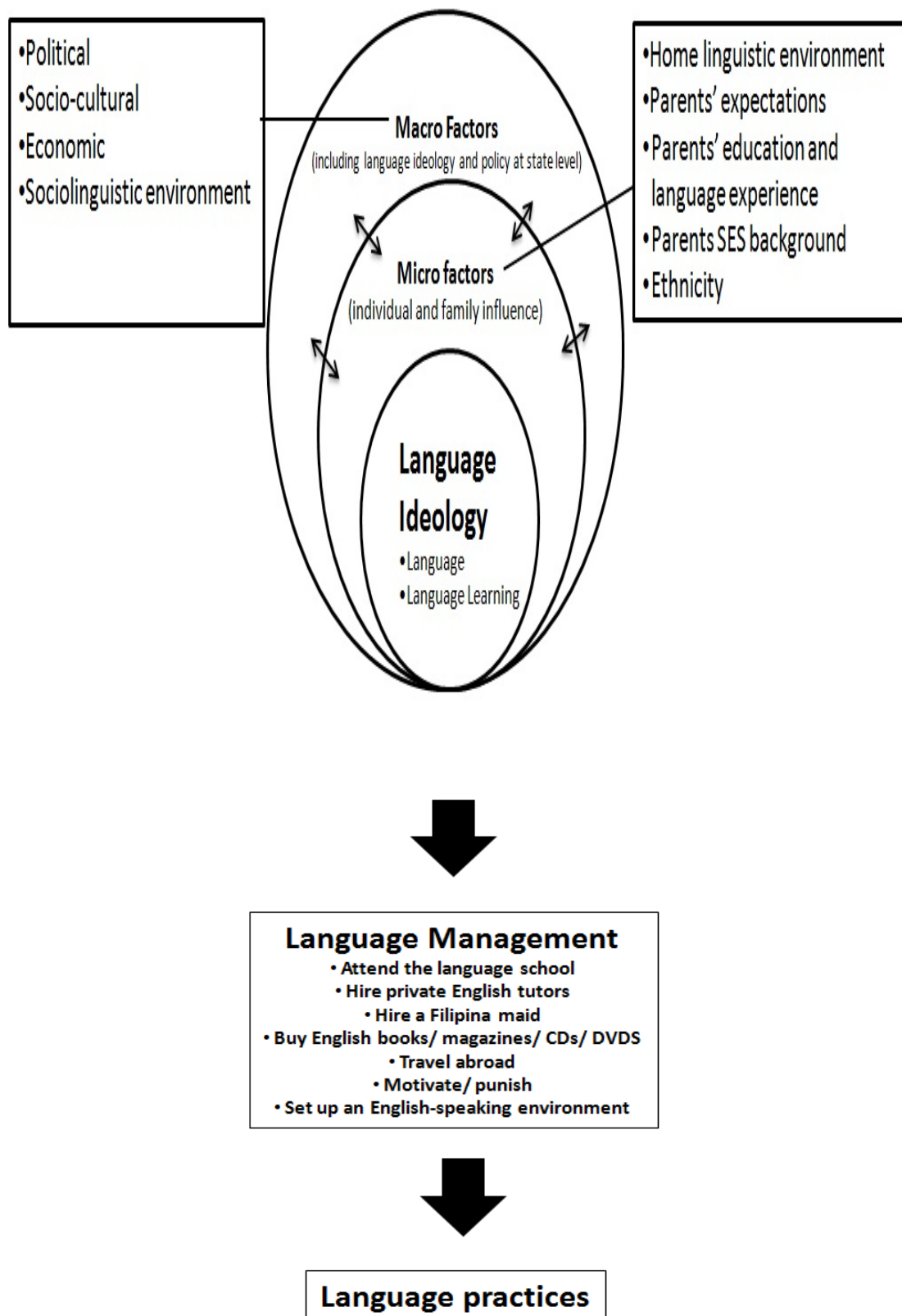


Figure 3- Revised 'Family Language Policy' Model



## **6.1 Implications**

This qualitative study also gives in-depth explanation of why parental behaviours contrast with national language policies and can serve as an indicator for the authorities for further language policy formation. Some researchers (e.g., Phillipson, 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000) support the right to be educated in one's mother-tongue, others argue that policies favouring mother-tongue education can be manipulated to maintain the social, economic, and political advantages of dominant groups (Ricento, 2006). In the Taiwanese context, negative perceptions of indigenous languages can be traced to the monolingual policy implemented by the KMT, which downplayed the value of minority languages. It must be acknowledged that more recently the government in Taiwan has shown positive attitudes towards minority languages and legitimised policies to maintain indigenous languages and cultures; yet the quality of mother-tongue teaching is not satisfactory. In looking for a suitable policy on mother-tongue and means of implementing it (including but not limited to teaching), the government can consider the experience of teaching minority languages from other countries, such as Malaysia, Singapore or China, and generate a model which can be applied in the Taiwanese context. If the government (and the people) decide that it is important to retain minority cultures and languages, then mother-tongue teaching should be designed to address and respect different minority cultures and their languages.

Drawing from a vast amount of literature, early bilingualism is shown to be beneficial to additional (whether third or foreign) language learning in various studies (Bialystok, 2009; Conboy & Mills, 2006; Cummins, 2001; Harley, 2010; King & Fogle, 2006; Salami, 2008). Since Taiwanese parents are concerned with their

children's English learning, maybe it is time for minority-language parents to rethink the advantages of language maintenance at home and for Mandarin-speaking parents to rethink the benefits of learning one of the indigenous languages at school. The linguistic complexity of Taiwan could be seen as an advantage not a 'problem'. There are plentiful opportunities to develop bilingualism (in various forms). Bilingualism as an important personal cognitive attribute in its own right was not identified by Taiwanese parents in this study. Perhaps there is only limited 'public' awareness of its value. Meanwhile, the central concern of Taiwanese parents about language learning is exclusively on the effectiveness of English language learning. Since bilingualism offers advantages in subsequently learning an additional language, there is no reason why the government should not take mother tongue education more seriously and preach the advantages of bilingualism.

Much of the debate and policy in the past has been determined by cultural or identity politics. The KMT government discouraged minority languages and rationalised their decision as unifying the whole country. In some aspects, it simplifies the language learning situation and people still have bilingualism if they wish. It did not, however, make best use of multilingual societies in Taiwan. The DPP government, on the other hand, encouraged minority languages and called for a need for 'tri- or multi-lingualism' for all (although some people argue English remains linguistic capital for the rich exclusively). Nevertheless, the implementation of this policy demands thorough cognitive and curricular consideration. Also, the minority language concern of the DPP government was limited largely to Minnan. Therefore, a more mature, balanced, informed debate is needed, with language learning theory, economics and globalisation all taken into consideration.

Last, the model implies the need to engage with the sociological debate over structure and agency (see Archer (2003) and Giddens (2009), for example). I suggest an alternative way to explain the complex formation of parental language ideology, is via the interaction between macro- and micro-factors, in terms of human reflexivity and to explore how this can be used to access the processes by which family language ideologies are formed. This is suggested as a potential future development of the work described in this thesis.

## **6.2 Contributions and Future Directions**

Taiwan has a very complex history, politically and economically. Politically, the KMT government has been insisting since 1949 that Taiwan must represent the Republic of China and because of the Cold War the defence of Taiwan was closely linked to the USA. This military-political link to America made English language important in the country. Then in the 1980s, the Taiwanese economy grew rapidly and English became an instrumental tool to reach out to the world markets. Recently, the rising world's factory - China – has restated the importance of Mandarin, but for economic rather than the previously imposed political purposes. The local languages face suppression through the promotion of these languages. It is a very complex situation, in which language policy is much tied up with political and economic changes. These rapid changes in Taiwan are an illustration of a general process of language being affected by changes in political, economic, social and cultural circumstances. It is an interesting illustration of language changes as a result of these forces. The language shift is similar to what is occurring in other contexts around the world, notably in immigrant societies and families, but it has its own peculiar nature because in Taiwan it is the 'foreign language' that has become the dominant language.

Language change and language shift have occurred and continue to occur in Taiwan. The driving forces, the causes behind this change are interesting, especially because of Taiwan's unique history. Therefore, Taiwan is an interesting illustration of a more general process of language change and shift. I cannot, however, generalise the specific findings to other contexts, or even to the rest of Taiwan. It is a tightly focused study in terms of its limited sample, which inhibits generalisation, but it does contribute to a better understanding of changes in language use and language ideology in a complex, rapidly changing situation. It improves our understanding of the phenomenon. In addition, this study provides a picture of the formation of parental language ideology, how they perceive languages, and how their perceptions influence their language management and language practices at home or in life. It can be seen as an illustration of what is happening in Taiwan now.

Furthermore, I started my study with an awareness of Curdt-Christiansen's model and gathered my empirical data with this in mind. I used her model as an outsider, objective perspective to understand and analyse my data but I found it is not entirely appropriate to explain what has been found in my multiple case-study. I subsequently, therefore, suggested an elaboration of this existing theoretical model. This significant critique to an existing model is one claim this thesis has to making an original contribution to knowledge.

If we are going to understand the revised model, we need a clear theoretical understanding of how micro-factors interact with macro-factors. If we can understand how structure and agency interact, we can understand better the formation of family language ideology. We need to theorise how individuals deal with, interact with, reflect on the macro-factors; something that is missing in the earlier model. In

addition, my study points to the need for further empirical study of this complex interaction. Curdt-Christiansen's model needs a better theorisation of society in general and of the Taiwanese context in particular. My research also highlights the need to bring more complex social theory into the study of language.

Last, this study was not designed to be generalisable to the bigger context in Taiwan; instead, I explored in-depth information about parental language ideology, its formation process and its driving forces. I cannot provide a descriptive generalisation out of fourteen cases, but I am locating my study in a bigger context (in Taiwan). In that sense, therefore, I am linking it to the big context. The study illustrates how particular aspects of life in Taiwan affect parents' thinking about language; it also contextualises parents' thoughts. Therefore, I am making theoretical suggestions about how changes in the economy and politics affect language ideology. It is possible that similar process will be going on around Taiwan but exploration of that demands a larger scale, quantitative study based on a truly representative sample. In addition, however, it would also be valuable for further research to be carried out in different geolinguistic areas in Taiwan and among different ethnic groups.

### **6.3 Personal Reflection on this Study**

Although the government has implemented the teaching of mother-tongue, tried to revitalise minority languages and postponed English teaching to a later age, the parental behaviours and family language policies seemed to contrast with the national aims. This study explored parents' language ideology using qualitative strategies to explain the process of ideology formation. I realise that this is a small scale study and the findings cannot be generalised to all situations in Taiwan. Nevertheless it does

provide important insights into the process by which major language struggles and shifts take place, providing a basis for a larger-scale future study because it is beyond the capacity of this study- it could be biting off more than could be chewed within the space constrain to an EdD thesis.

The fluid linguistic situation in Taiwan, such as the rise of English and the decline of minority languages, also challenges the notion of 'language and identity'. Literature shows that language and identity are inseparable (Green, 1990). Huang (2000) finds that some newer generations of 'Mainlanders' are not interested in their cultures of origin and do not identify themselves as 'Mainlander' but 'Taiwanese'. In my study, language shift happened in all Hakfa-speaking families; it raises an issue of whether the third generation of Hakka people (no matter monolingual-Mandarin speakers or Mandarin-English speakers) identify themselves as 'Hakka' people or not or 'new Taiwanese' more generally? In addition to identity concerns, the perceived social capital status of different languages would appear from my research to be an important factor in language shift. Do people prefer to identify themselves with a particular linguistic speaking group rather than others? The relationship between language, culture, power and identity is not the focus of this study, but it is worth exploring in further studies.

The development and maintenance of a language depends among other things, on the attitudes of the youth towards that language. If the youth embrace a language and see value in it, they are likely to maintain the language and hence pass it on to next generation (LettMinnan, 2009). However, it also requires efforts from other agents, such as the authorities, the community and the family. What is needed in order to revitalise these languages is not just recommendations which remain on paper, but

the implementation of such recommendations. If the government and the public see the importance of mother-tongue revitalisation, the government, communities and parents (especially minority-language speakers) may make efforts to maintain minority languages. In other words, it needs endeavour from the family, the society, and the government as a whole. Once again, as I mentioned above, if the government and the people decide to maintain minority languages, then maybe it is the time to ensure ‘majority-language speakers’ can receive an education which provides them with an appreciation of other cultures and languages and ‘minority-language speakers’ have the right to be educated in their mother tongue. In this case, perhaps Taiwan will become an example of a country where indigenous languages are revived rather than buried.

## Appendix 1- The Questionnaire

Dear parents,

Firstly, I would like to thank you all for participating in my pilot study before. As I mentioned in first interview, there would be a follow-up research enquiry which needs your participation, too. The second interview will be done in the following months. The success of the research enquiry depends on your participation and I sincerely invite you to continue participating in the research. The interview will last about an hour. Either or both parents are welcome.

The enclosed questionnaire is to explore background information of your family. Please fill in and give it back to your child by 20<sup>th</sup> November. I will collect it in class.

If you have further enquiry or there is anything I can do to help (regarding to English language), please do not hesitate to contact me. I would be more than happy to have conversation with you. My mobile phone: 0915551717 and my email: [rene\\_0922@hotmail.com](mailto:rene_0922@hotmail.com)

- ☐ I am willing to continue participating in the research. My child's name is \_\_\_\_\_ and my contact number is \_\_\_\_\_.
- I prefer to have the interview on ☐ weekdays ☐ weekends
- I prefer to have the interview at ☐ the language school ☐ my home
- ☐ a public place near my home
- ☐ I am not able to continue participating in the research.



**I. Please fill in the blanks:**

**Child's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Age:** \_\_\_\_\_ **School:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parents' Profession:** **Father** \_\_\_\_\_ **Mother** \_\_\_\_\_

**Household Size:** \_\_\_\_\_ **adults** \_\_\_\_\_ **children**

**II. For the following questions, please choose one answer and put a '✓' in the box in front of your answer or fill in your answers in the spaces provided.**

1. Father's Age: ☐ 25-30 ☐ 31-35 ☐ 36-40 ☐ 41-45 ☐ 45-50 ☐ 50 +

Mother's Age: ☐ 25-30 ☐ 31-35 ☐ 36-40 ☐ 41-45 ☐ 45-50 ☐ 50 +

**2. Parents' highest level education**

Father: ☐ Junior High School ☐ Senior High School ☐ College ☐ Undergraduate Degree ☐ Graduate School

Mother: ☐ Junior High School ☐ Senior High School ☐ College ☐ Undergraduate Degree ☐ Graduate School

**3. My gross household annual income is:**

☐ Under 360,000 NTD ☐ 360,001 - 720,000 NTD ☐ 720,001 - 1,080,000 NTD

☐ 1,080,001 - 1,440,000 NTD ☐ Above 1,440,001 NTD

**4. Parents' ethnicity:**

Father: ☐ Mainlander ☐ Minnan ☐ Hakka ☐ Aboriginal People ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother: ☐ Mainlander ☐ Minnan ☐ Hakka ☐ Aboriginal People ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Parents' Linguistic Background:**

Father: ☐ Mandarin ☐ Minnan ☐ Hakfa ☐ Aboriginal language ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother: ☐ Mandarin ☐ Minnan ☐ Hakfa ☐ Aboriginal language ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Parents' Foreign Language Background**

Father: ☐ English (☐ Very Fluent ☐ Basic Communication ☐ Barely Understand)

☐ Japanese (☐ Very Fluent ☐ Basic Communication ☐ Barely Understand)

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_ (☐ Very Fluent ☐ Basic Communication ☐ Barely Understand)

Mother: ☐ English (☐ Very Fluent ☐ Basic Communication ☐ Barely Understand)

☐ Japanese (☐ Very Fluent ☐ Basic Communication ☐ Barely Understand)

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_ (☐ Very Fluent ☐ Basic Communication ☐ Barely Understand)

**7. Language(s) parents speak to each other at home:**

☐ Mandarin ☐ Minnan ☐ Hakfa ☐ Aboriginal language

☐ English ☐ Japanese ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Language(s) parents speak to children and frequency**

	<b>A lot</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Occasionally</b>	<b>Never</b>
<b>Mandarin</b>				
<b>Minnan</b>				
<b>Hakfa</b>				
<b>Aboriginal language</b>				
<b>English</b>				
<b>Japanese</b>				
<b>Other</b> _____				

**9. Language(s) children (if there are more than 2 siblings) speak to each other at home:**

- ☐ Mandarin   ☐ Minnan   ☐ Hakfa   ☐ Aboriginal language  
☐ English   ☐ Japanese   ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Language(s) children speak to children/ peers and frequency**

	<b>A lot</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Occasionally</b>	<b>Never</b>
<b>Mandarin</b>				
<b>Minnan</b>				
<b>Hakfa</b>				
<b>Aboriginal language</b>				
<b>English</b>				
<b>Japanese</b>				
<b>Other</b> _____				

## Appendix 2- Language Attitudes and Behaviours

(Minnan-speaker, for example)

1. In which language do YOU speak to the following people?

	Always in Mandarin	In Mandarin more often than Minnan	In Mandarin and Minnan equally	In Minnan more often than Mandarin	Always in Minnan
1. Father					
2. Mother					
3. Siblings					
4. Friends					
5. Colleagues					
6. Neighbours					
7. Children					

2. In which language do the following people speak to YOU?

	Always in Mandarin	In Mandarin more often than Minnan	In Mandarin and Minnan equally	In Minnan more often than Mandarin	Always in Minnan
1. Father					
2. Mother					
3. Siblings					
4. Friends					
5. Colleagues					
6. Neighbours					
7. Children					

3. How important or unimportant do you think your Mandarin is for people to do the following? There are no right or wrong answers.

For people to	Important	A little important	A little unimportant	Unimportant
1. make friends				
2. earn plenty of money				
3. read				
4. write				
5. watch TV/ movies				
6. get a job				
7. become cleverer				
8. be liked				
9. live in Taiwan				
10. go to church/ temple				
11. sing				
12. play sport				
13. bring up children				
14. go shopping				
15. make phone calls				
16. pass exams				
17. be accepted in the community				
18. talk to friends in school				
19. talk to teachers in school				
20. talk to people out of school				

4. How important or unimportant do you think your mother tongue (if other than Mandarin) is for people to do the following? There are no right or wrong answers.

For people to	Important	A little important	A little unimportant	Unimportant
1. make friends				
2. earn plenty of money				
3. read				

4. write				
5. watch TV/ movies				
6. get a job				
7. become cleverer				
8. be liked				
9. live in Taiwan				
10. go to church/ temple				
11. sing				
12. play sport				
13. bring up children				
14. go shopping				
15. make phone calls				
16. pass exams				
17. be accepted in the community				
18. talk to friends in school				
19. talk to teachers in school				
20. talk to people out of school				

5. How important or unimportant do you think English is for people to do the following? There are no right or wrong answers.

For people to	Important	A little important	A little unimportant	Unimportant
1. make friends				
2. earn plenty of money				
3. read				
4. write				
5. watch TV/ movies				
6. get a job				
7. become cleverer				
8. be liked				
9. live in Taiwan				
10. go to church/ temple				

11. sing				
12. play sport				
13. bring up children				
14. go shopping				
15. make phone calls				
16. pass exams				
17. be accepted in the community				
18. talk to friends in school				
19. talk to teachers in school				
20. talk to people out of school				

**6. Here are some statements about Minnan.**

**Please say whether you agree or disagree with these statements. There are no right or wrong answers. Please be as honest as possible. Circle ONE of the following:**

SA = Strongly Agree

A = Agree

NAND = Neither Agree or Disagree

D = Disagree

SD = Strongly Disagree

1. I like hearing Minnan	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
2. I prefer to watch TV in Minnan than Mandarin.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
3. Minnan should be taught to all pupils in Taiwan.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
4. It's a waste of time to keep Minnan alive.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
5. I like speaking Minnan.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
6. Minnan is difficult language to learn.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
7. There are more useful languages to learn than Minnan.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
8. I'm likely to use Minnan as an adult.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
9. Minnan is a language worth learning.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
10. Minnan has no place in the modern Taiwan.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
11. Minnan will disappear as everyone in Taiwan can speak Mandarin.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
12. Minnan is essential to take part fully in Taiwanese life.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
13. We need to preserve Minnan.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
14. Children should not be made to learn Minnan.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD

15. I would like Minnan to take over from Mandarin language in Taiwan.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
16. It's hard to study Science in Minnan.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
17. You are considered a lower class person if you speak Minnan.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
18. I prefer to be taught in Minnan.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
19. As an adult, I would like to marry a Minnan speaker.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
20. I would like my children to be Minnan speaking.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD

**7. Here are some statements about English. Please say whether you agree or disagree with these statements. There are no right or wrong answers. Please be as honest as possible. Circle ONE of the following:**

SA = Strongly Agree

A = Agree

NAND = Neither Agree or Disagree

D = Disagree

SD = Strongly Disagree

1. It's important to be able to speak English.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
2. Knowing English makes people cleverer.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
3. Children get confused when learning English alone with other Taiwanese languages.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
4. Speaking English helps to get a job.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
5. Being able to write in English is important.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
6. I feel sorry for people who cannot speak English.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
7. People know more if they speak English.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
8. Speaking English helps people get promotion in their job.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
9. Young children learn to speak English and other Taiwanese languages at the same time with ease.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
10. People earn more money if they speak English.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
11. English is important in Taiwan.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
12. I would want my children to speak English.	SA	A	NAND	D	SD

## **Appendix 3- Initial Interview Questions**

### **I. English Language Learning**

#### **A. Home Language Policy**

1. Do either of you speak English to your child? How frequent?
2. Do you require your child to review English at home? How many minutes per day?

#### **B. National Language Policy**

1. What do you think of the ban of teaching English at preschools?
2. What do you think of the English teaching policy in Taichung (teaching English at third grade)?

#### **C. Formal English Learning**

##### **a. Preschool**

1. What do you think of the ban of teaching English at preschools?
2. Did the policy influence your choice of the preschool? How?
3. Please state the English teaching at the preschool. (eg. teaching hours, materials, faculty, etc)
4. Did either of you help with the review of English homework at preschool stage? How many minutes per day?
5. Were you satisfied with your child's English learning at the preschool?

##### **b. primary school**

1. Did you change the primary school due to its English education? Please explain.
2. Were you satisfied with English education at this primary school?
3. Did either of you help with the review of English homework at primary school stage? How many minutes per day?
4. What do you think of the English education at primary schools?
5. Were you satisfied with your child's English learning at the primary school?

##### **c. secondary school**

1. Did you change the secondary school due to its English education? Please explain.
2. Were you satisfied with English education at this secondary school?
3. Did either of you help with the review of English homework at secondary school stage? How many minutes per day?
4. What do you think of the English education at secondary schools?
5. Were you satisfied with your child's English learning at the secondary school?



#### **D. Private Lessons**

1. Why did you choose this language school? Please explain.
2. Did either of you learn with your child at the language school?
3. Did either of you help with the review of English homework from this language school? How many minutes per day?
4. Are you satisfied with the effectiveness of your child's English learning at this language school?
5. Do/ Did you send your child to learn English at other places? Please state your reasons or opinions.
6. Are/ Were you satisfied with the effectiveness?

#### **E. Other English-learning related behaviours/ activities**

1. Do you use other materials/aids to help with your child's English learning (eg. books, movies, etc)? Why?
2. Do you think those facilities/tools facilitate the effectiveness of English learning?
3. Do you encourage your child to participate English-learning-related activities? (eg. watch foreign movies, English learning camps, story-telling activities, etc) Why?
4. Do you think such activities facilitate the effectiveness of English learning?
5. Does your family provide other chances for your child to learn English? (eg. native family friends to talk to, native pen pals, English learning trip abroad, etc)
6. Do you think such chances facilitate the effectiveness of English learning?

### **II. Mother-tongue education**

#### **A. Home Language Policy**

1. What are parents' first languages? Do you use them at home?
2. What language do you choose to speak to your child? Why?
3. Do you plan not to use (both of) your first language(s) to your child? Why?
4. If there are two native languages at home? Which one do you use or both? Or do you use Mandarin only? Why?

#### **B. National Language Policy**

1. What do you think of 'mother-tongue education' at primary school?
2. If both of you are Mainlanders, which native language does your child choose to study at school? Why?
3. How is your child's language learning in terms of Mandarin, native languages or mother-tongues? Do they meet your expectation?

## **Appendix 4 – Revised Interview Questions**

### **I. Language Ideology**

#### **A. First Language + Second Language**

##### **a. national language policy**

1. What do you think of ‘mother-tongue education’ at primary school?
2. What are parents’ first languages? How did the native language chosen at school? Why?
3. Do you help your child learn mother tongue?
4. How is your child’s language learning in terms of Mandarin, native languages or mother-tongues? Do you set targets or expectation for him/her? Do they achieve your expectation?
5. Do you approve or disapprove learning mother tongue in Taiwan? Do you think speaking one’s mother tongue is important (in terms of cultural identity, economic concerns, job opportunity, etc)
6. How could you describe the status of mother tongue in Taiwan?

##### **b. home language policy**

1. What are parents’ first languages? Do you use them at home? To whom do you use it to?
2. What language do you choose to speak to your child? Why?
3. Do you plan not to use (both of) your first language(s) to your child? Why?
4. If there are two native languages at home? Which one do you use or both? Or do you use Mandarin only? Why?
5. Does anyone in the family help the child to practice mother tongue?

#### **B. English Language Learning**

##### **a. national Language Policy**

3. Do you think learning English is important?
4. Do you think being able to speak English is important in Taiwan (in terms of cultural identity, economic concerns, job opportunity, etc)?
5. What do you think of the ban on English teaching at preschools?
6. What do you think of the English teaching policy in Taichung (teaching English at third grade)?

##### **b. home Language Policy**

1. Do either of you speak English to your child? How frequent?
2. Do you require your child to review English at home? How many minutes per day?

## **II. Language Management and Practice**

### **A. Preschool**

6. Did the ban on English influence your choice of the preschool? How?
7. Please state the English teaching at that preschool. (eg. teaching hours, materials, faculty, etc)
8. Did either of you help with the review of English homework at preschool stage?  
How many minutes per day?
9. Were you satisfied with your child's English learning at the preschool?

### **B. Formal Schooling**

#### **a. primary school**

6. Did you change the primary school due to its English education? Please explain.
7. Were you satisfied with English education at this primary school?
8. Did either of you help with the review of English homework at primary school stage? How many minutes per day?
9. What do you think of the English education at primary schools?
10. Were you satisfied with your child's English learning at the primary school?

#### **b. secondary school**

6. Did you change the secondary school due to its English education? Please explain.
7. Were you satisfied with English education at this secondary school?
8. Did either of you help with the review of English homework at secondary school stage? How many minutes per day?
9. What do you think of the English education at secondary schools?
10. Were you satisfied with your child's English learning at the secondary school?

### **C. Private Schooling**

1. Why did you choose this language school? Please explain.
2. Did either of you learn with your child at the language school?
3. Did either of you help with the review of English homework from this language school? How many minutes per day?
4. Are you satisfied with the effectiveness of your child's English learning at this language school?
5. Do/ Did you send your child to learn English at other places? Please state your reasons or opinions.
6. Are/ Were you satisfied with the effectiveness?

## **D. Other English-learning-related Behaviours or Activities**

### **a. English learning materials or activities**

7. Do you buy any English-learning-related facilities/tools for your child? (software, CDs, DVDs, etc) Why?
8. Do you think those facilities/tools facilitate the effectiveness of English learning?
9. Do you encourage your child to participate English-learning-related activities? (eg. watch foreign movies, English learning camps, story-telling activities, etc) Why?
10. Do you think such activities facilitate the effectiveness of English learning?

### **b. family trips abroad**

1. Did you have any family trip abroad in the past year? Did you plan it to improve you child's English learning?
2. Do you think the trip facilitates the effectiveness of English learning?

### **A. Other chances**

1. Does your family provide other chances for your child to learn English? (eg. native family friends to talk to, native pen pals, English learning trip abroad, etc)
2. Do you think such chances facilitate the effectiveness of English learning?

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